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JONATHAN CAPE

## NIETZSCHE AND GOETHE

ERICH HELLER

## 1

IN 1817 Goethe published in *Kunst und Altertum* a little essay entitled 'Epochs of the Spirit, based on Hermann's newest records'. Inspired by the book *De Mythologia Graecorum Antiquissimorum* of the Leipzig scholar Gottfried Hermann, this sketch, anticipating in its modest way the method of Spengler's historical morphology, speaks of four major phases in the history of man. These 'four epochs of the human spirit', 'profoundly contemplated', as Goethe claims, 'and fittingly named', he calls the Ages of Poetry, Theology, Philosophy and Prose. They are preceded, according to his account, by a state which does not even qualify for a name. It is the chaos before the beginning and before the Word; although even then a few favoured spirits might rise above the speechless dark, crudely meditating the universal mess and uttering raucous sounds to express their confused astonishment. Theirs is an apparently barren state of mind which nevertheless holds the seeds of observation and philosophy, of giving nature names, and thus of poetry. From these inarticulate mutterings emerges the first Age proper, the Age of Poetry, in which man projects his tender familiarity with himself, his desires and fears, satisfactions and discontents on to the things which surround him. It is a time of popular myth and poetical fancy; the soul, overconfidently and lightheartedly, frees itself of the cumbersome abstruseness of the primeval stage. The spirits of myth and poetry wield their undivided power over the community which is, as Goethe says, distinguished by a sensuousness at once free, serious, noble and enhanced by the imagination.

Soon, however, man finds himself, perhaps by force of external circumstances, thrown into new perplexities. The world ceases to be his castle, in which the mind and the imagination dwell comfortably between walls covered with allegorical tapestries, but appears once more inadequately understood and mastered. The poetically comprehending creature is beset again by apprehension, the idyllic order threatened by a multitude of demons demanding to be placated in their wildness, reverenced in their incalculable dominion, and conquered no longer by pretty fancies but only through a more energetic activity of the spirit. Gone is the graceful intimacy of the Age of Poetry, and the Mystery is reinstated. It is to this epoch that ultimately God is revealed, with the fear and terror of the primeval phase purified into love and awe. We may call it, says Goethe, the

Age of the Holy, or the Age of Theology, or the Age of Reason in its highest sense.

Again, it cannot last. For Reason will insist on reasoning and ultimately, as a conqueror often does with the object of his conquests, destroy what it is reasoning about. Analysing what eludes analysis, systematizing what defies the system, it will in the end deceive itself by pretending that the vainly besieged mystery does not exist. At this point the Age of the Holy gives way to the Age of Philosophy, or, to use a more familiar term, to enlightenment and finally rationalism. We cannot, says Goethe, but acknowledge the noble and intelligent endeavour of this epoch; yet while it may suit some talented individuals, it cannot satisfy whole peoples. The Prosaic Age is bound to follow. The all too radical attempt of the Age of Philosophy at a 'humanization' and rationalization of the mysterious ends in a perverted miracle. The mystery, cheated of its rightful place, goes underground, reverting to its primeval, unholy and barbarous stage. The human spirit, agitated by historical catastrophes, leaps backward over all hurdles which the guidance of reason had erected, clinging here and there to remnants of tradition, scattered residues of many incompatible beliefs, then plunges headlong into pools of insipid mythologies, bringing to the top the muddy poetry of the depths and proclaiming it as the creed of the age.

No longer are there teachers who teach with calm and reason, but merely men sowing grain and weeds in random profusion. No centre holds the human world together and men must lose their bearings; for countless individuals step forth as leaders, preaching their perfect foolishness as the acme of wisdom. In such an age every belief turns into blasphemy, and the proclamation of mysteries into sacrilege. Elements, once evolving naturally one from the other, are now interlocked in perpetual strife. It is the return of the *tohu-bohu*; yet a chaos not fertile as the first, but so deadening and dying that not even God could create from it a world worthy of Himself.

It is surprising that a peaceful Leipzig scholar, whose attitude Nietzsche once described as the typically *sächsisch* combination of humanism and religious rationalism, should have been the begetter of such a rare flight of Goethe's historical imagination, culminating in a precise vision of the apocalypse through which we are living. But although the condensed precision of this seemingly casual prophecy is unique in Goethe's writings, shadows of things to come fall on many a page of his mature work. In the guarded and fortified stillness of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (the work that occupied him at the same time) echoes can be discerned of subterranean rumblings, menacing with future eruptions a society whose exposures and dangers are acknowledged by the very

didactic passion of this extraordinary work — a work which struck Nietzsche, in one of his more irreverent moods, as a mixture of 'the most beautiful things in the world' and 'the most ridiculous triflings'. Indeed, a certain parallelism is obvious between the three epochs of the spirit and the three stations in Wilhelm Meister's pilgrimage which fill the first book of the novel, so that the monastic sphere of St Joseph the Second is informed with all the ingredients of the Age of the Holy, with elements of the Age of Poetry lingering on, while the estate of Hersilie's uncle clearly represents the Age of Philosophy, with no picture tolerated in the eighteenth-century portrait gallery that 'might point even remotely towards religion, tradition, mythology, legend or fable'. And there is finally Makarie's ancient castle, looking so fresh and new — 'as though builders and masons had only just departed' — where Goethe's, not Newton's physics are pursued, a science whose calculations reveal, rather than disturb, the harmony between man's intuitive and rational natures, showing him, not as the ruthlessly dominating, but as the spiritually integrating part of the universe. This castle of Makarie stands like a fortress, built in Goethe's imagination, to ward off, as their most positive alternative, the horrors of the Prosaic Age.

Furthermore, in that masterpiece of ambiguity, *Faust*, in which the prosaic and denying spirit of Mephistopheles unwittingly gives rise to poetry so superb and affirmation so profound that we stand puzzled before its inconsistent glory — in *Faust*, the clash between the holy simplicity of the Gretchen world and the reason of the philosopher, aided by the prose of the devil, determines not only the tragedy of Part I, but finds expression also in Part II. Indeed, if we sought in Goethe's works for the most poignant poetic dramatization of the defeat of the holy at the hands of prosaic engineering, we would have to call on the faithful old couple in their little house on the hill, sacrificed to the planning of the future bliss of millions:

BAUCIS	Menschenopfer mussten bluten, Nachts erscholl des Jammers Qual; Meerab flossen Feuergluten, Morgens war es ein Kanal. Gottlos ist er, ihn gelüstet Unsre Hütte, unser Hain; Wie er sich als Nachbar brüstet, Soll man untertäugig sein.
PHILEMON	Hat er uns doch angeboten Schönes Gut im neuen Land!
BAUCIS	Traue nicht dem Wasserboden, Halt auf deiner Höhe stand!

PHILEMON Lasst uns zur Kapelle treten,  
 Letzten Sonnenblick zu schaun!  
 Lasst uns läuten, knien, beten,  
 Und dem alten Gott vertraun!

[Human sacrifices had to bleed, the night resounded with the cries of anguish; floods of fire poured into the sea, in the morning it was a canal. Godless is he, lusting after our cottage, our grove; boastful neighbour that he is, he demands obedience. — Yet he has offered us a pretty estate in the new country! — Do not trust the watery soil, hold out on your height! — Let us go to our chapel, catch the sun's last radiance, ring the bells, and kneel and pray, and put our trust in the hands of God.]

What, in the Prosaic Age, is to become of poetry itself, its activity and its enjoyment; how will this very poem *Faust* be received? Goethe asks, five days before his death, in his last letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt: 'The absurdity and confusion of the day is such', he writes, 'as to convince me that the honest and prolonged labour with which I have built this strange edifice will be but ill rewarded; it will be cast up by the sea, fragments of a wreck, and for some time to come buried under the barren dunes of the age. Confused gospels, begetting confused deeds, are abroad in the world, and my business is to enhance and purify what is mine and what has remained with me, as you, my worthy friend, also contrive to do up there in your castle.'

In other words, the Prosaic Age is upon us, with its disenchantment of myth and poetry, and its 'mystification' of reason itself. It will — to use Goethe's words — 'drag into the vulgar light of the day the ancient heritage of a noble past, and destroy not only the capacity for profound feeling and the beliefs of peoples and priests, but even that belief of reason which divines meaningful coherence behind strangeness and seeming disorder'.

It is, then, the destruction, or rather the mutilation and deformation of something which Goethe, perhaps for want of a better word, calls 'belief', which is one of the symptoms, or one of the causes, of the repulsiveness of the Prosaic Age. Goethe, of course, was no believer, and we have to move with the utmost wariness as soon as the notion of belief enters into our reflections. But, on the other hand, we need not be too prudish. Having dismissed from our minds all revivalist connotations of the word, we may take courage from the fact that Goethe, at about the same time, uses it himself in a very much more contaminated neighbourhood; namely in connection with the Old Testament. Meditating on the desert adventures of the Israelites, he says, in his 'Notes and Discourses concerning the *West-östlicher Divan*': 'The one and only real and profound theme

of the world and of human history — a theme to which all others are subordinate — remains the conflict between belief and unbelief. All epochs dominated by belief in whatever shape, have a radiance and bliss of their own, and bear fruit for their people as well as for posterity. All epochs over which unbelief in whatever form maintains its miserable victory, even if they boast and shine for a while with false splendour, are ignored by posterity because nobody likes to drudge his life out over sterile things.'

Paradoxically enough, what follows leaves no doubt that Goethe, indulging at this point in a rather ruthless sort of Bible criticism, does not mean the belief of the believer in the Old Testament. What then, does he mean? For clearly, this belief can be no trifling matter; it makes and unmakes epochs by its very coming and going; it gives the Age of the Holy its holiness and in parting abandons the next to its prosaic fate; and its struggle with unbelief is proclaimed as the only theme of genuine historical relevance.

The question of what he meant by 'belief' would have drawn from Goethe different answers at different times, all equally veiled, ironical — and irritated. For the question touches upon a sphere which Goethe, with so much rightness, and so much legitimate priggishness, held to be reserved for the initiates — 'Sagt es niemand, nur den Weisen, Weil die Menge gleich verhöhnet'. It is, however, not our intention to inquire into the nature of Goethe's own beliefs (if only to avoid a discussion of that sublime menace besetting all studies of Goethe: pantheism), but rather to form a clearer idea of Goethe's critique of his age. For there is little doubt that the mature Goethe would have put his contemporary world, in spite of occasional outbursts of Panama Canal optimism, into a rather shadowy place on his map of the world's historical epochs, at some removes, in any case, from the Age of Poetry and the Age of the Holy, and considerably nearer those grey stretches where history writes its most atrocious prose passages. And he would certainly not have discovered in it many glimpses of that radiance which emanates from 'epochs of belief'.

Nor is the question concerned with the historical accuracy of Goethe's scheme of epochs. It would indeed be easy to disprove it, perhaps still easier to prove that our seemingly most effective refutation would simply be due to our use of a different code of selection and emphasis in ordering the mass of historical raw material. Neither shall we discuss the justification of Goethe's — or later Nietzsche's — judgments on their contemporary world. Undoubtedly they are what it is the fashion to denounce as 'wild generalizations'. But then, this is the same vice in which the prophets of the Old Testament indulged. Perhaps the Israel of their time was, in fact, a very much better community than their indignation suggests.

But if we reached this conclusion, and even if it were based on the greatest profusion of historical evidence, our findings would ultimately reflect not a higher degree of 'objective knowledge', but our allegiance to values which the prophets would have denounced as false. And as this mental and moral situation is the precise cause of their indignation, it is we who are under judgment — a position which is generally not regarded as favourable to the forming of unbiased views. Also, I think, our case against the justice of the judges must be aggravated by the fact that their prophecy has come true. The Temple was destroyed.

What the mature Goethe means by belief has that much in common with the prophets; for him too it is the active realization of certain *values* in the lives of men. And our question turns on the nature of these values, a question which, as Nietzsche knew, 'is more *fundamental* than the question of the certainty [of knowledge]: the latter becomes serious only if the question of values is answered'. Goethe would have accepted this, although it stands as a key-phrase within a body of thought which at first sight is worlds apart from the world of Goethe. And Goethe actually did accept it, if not in the radical spirit in which Nietzsche proposed it, nor, of course, with the same intensity of desperate doubt about the worth of knowledge. His opposition to Newton, for instance, is ultimately based not on a conviction of his own *scientific* superiority, but on his commitment to values which he believed were threatened by man's adopting an exclusively mathematical-analytical method in his dealings with nature. Elsewhere I have attempted to show how Goethe confuses the issue in his scientific writings<sup>1</sup> but outside, as it were, the laboratory, he makes this abundantly clear, as for instance, in the words which Wilhelm Meister, here no longer a disciple of life, but the expositor of Goethe's own wisdom, addresses to the astronomer: 'I can well understand that it must please you, sages of the sky, to bring the immense universe gradually as close to your eyes as I saw that planet just now. But allow me to say . . . that these instruments with which we aid our senses, have a morally detrimental effect on man . . . For what he thus perceives with his senses is out of keeping with his inner faculty of discernment; it would need a culture, as high as only exceptional people can possess, in order to harmonize, to a certain extent, the inner truth with the inappropriate vision from without. . . .'

## 2

'There must have been a time when the religious, aesthetic and moral perceptions were at one.' This is not, though it could be, a

<sup>1</sup> cf. *The Cambridge Journal*, Vol. III, 8, 'Goethe and the Idea of Scientific Truth'.

sentence from the context of Goethe's 'epochs of the spirit', but one of Nietzsche's posthumous notes from the time of his *Transvaluation of Values*. It is so much a Goethean thought that it seems to have been expanded into the following reflection about Goethe in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, one of the last works of Nietzsche:

Goethe — in a grandiose attempt to get beyond the eighteenth century through the naturalness of the Renaissance, a kind of self-conquest on the part of that century — had within himself its strongest instincts: its sentimentality, its nature-idolatry, its anti-historical bias, its idealism, lack of realism and revolutionary spirit (which is only one form of the lack of realism). He called in the help of history, of natural science, of antiquity, even of Spinoza, and, above all, of practical activity; he surrounded himself with closed horizons; he did not desert life, but placed himself at its centre and took as much as possible upon himself, above himself, into himself. What he aimed at was *totality*; he fought against the sundering of reason, sensuality, feeling, will . . . ; he disciplined himself into wholeness, he created himself . . . Goethe was, in the midst of an unrealistic age, a *convinced realist* . . . He envisaged man as strong, highly civilized, skilled in all skills of the body, holding himself in check, having respect for himself as a creature who may be allowed to taste the whole width and wealth of naturalness, who is strong enough for this kind of freedom; who is tolerant, not from weakness but from strength, because he knows how to use to his advantage what would destroy an average character. . . .

Although things of this kind have been said so often in later appraisals of Goethe that they have come to smack of the commonplace, in the context of Nietzsche's *Transvaluation of Values* they have a profundity of their own, and receive in the concluding words of this passage, so far withheld, a surprising twist which we shall, a little later, allow to shock us. For the time being we would like to reflect on the identification in this passage of Goethe's realism with his antagonism to the severance of reason, sensuality, feeling and will; or, in Nietzsche's previous formula, on Goethe's roots in an imaginary period in which religious, aesthetic and moral perceptions were at one — a unity so disastrously destroyed in the Prosaic Age.

The term 'realism' had a definite meaning, as the opposite to nominalism, at a time when metaphysical disputes enjoyed the advantages of as rigid a discipline as is nowadays accorded to scientific research. But, of course, this was before the word became used as a coin of uncertain value in that nineteenth-century bazaar of ideas where other counters too, such as transcendentalism, idealism, empiricism, materialism, positivism, bought a few frills

of the mind. Thus Goethe's 'realism', fallen among the philistines, assumed so often the meagre meaning of 'down to earth', or 'practical', or 'you will learn, my boy'. Or else, as the name of a literary *genre*, 'realism' was to provide a convenient common denominator for all writers who harness the exuberance of their imaginations to the austere task of calling a spade a spade.

Clearly, this is not what Nietzsche means in speaking of the realist Goethe. What, I think, he does mean I would like to illustrate with the help of three Goethe aphorisms which are printed in the closest vicinity to one another in *Maximen und Reflexionen*. The first reads as follows: 'It is now about twenty years since the whole race of Germans began to transcend. Should they ever wake up to this fact, they will look very odd to themselves.' The second, famous enough, is: 'In a true symbol the particular represents the universal, not as a dream or shadow, but as the living and instantaneous revelation of the unfathomable.' The third is at first rather obscure: 'All that is ideal will ultimately, once it is claimed by the real, consume it, and itself. As the paper money does with the silver and itself.' There is, not merely by virtue of their sequence in print, an intimate connection between these three aphorisms. The first, of course, ridicules the German *Transzentalphilosophie* of Goethe's time; the second provides the happiest condensation of Goethe's own idea of the relationship between the transcendent and the immanent, the 'ideal' and the 'real'; the third is the epigrammatic abbreviation of the prophecy of the Prosaic Age, this time seen as the destructive, nihilistic outcome of the tearing apart of the real and the ideal sphere.

It is a very long story which these three aphorisms succeed in cutting short, and it would be an invidious business indeed to restore it to its original length. But perhaps a few meditations are permissible.

Goethe's hostility towards all forms of transcendental philosophy has certainly no affinities whatever with a very much later philosophical offensive against the transcendent, waged under the name of positivism — a campaign with which Nietzsche is often associated by his more simple-minded interpreters. On the contrary, Goethe's ill feelings against the transcendentalist sprang from the same source which sustained his energetic attacks on the kind of positivism which he believed was inherent in Newtonian physics. He regarded both transcendentalists and positivists (of whom he had the idea, if not the name) as the systematizers of a perception of reality which to him appeared absurd, indeed as that very 'absurdity and confusion of the day' which he denounced at so late an hour of his life to Wilhelm von Humboldt. What both these tendencies of the mind — superficially so inimical to each other — have in common is a

passion for abstraction. And it is in abstraction that Goethe saw the fatal loophole through which reason could escape into an illusory freedom from its commitments to what is of the senses, of feeling, of the will. He dreaded this emancipation of reason, whether it is exercised in the adventures of transcendental speculation, or in the mathematical calculus which creates, despite its apparent empiricism, the phenomena to be fitted into its abstract order.

Either method of emancipating reason from the totality of the human person appeared to Goethe as the denial of his vision of man, the negation of the values to which he was committed, the heresy *kat'exochen*. He sincerely believed that this way lay catastrophe.

In the pursuits of transcendentalism he discerned the danger that reason, doped with transcendental ambition, would construct a world, too big in its anaemic hugeness, for man to live and love in, distracting him at every point from — as Wilhelm Meister puts it — 'attending with spontaneous care to the duty of the day, examining the purity of your hearts and the stability of your minds . . . Only then will you find the right attitude towards the sublime; for it is to the sublime that we dedicate ourselves in all manner of activities and in a spirit of awe . . .' In a spirit of awe: not of that spiritual conceit, of which he suspected the architects of the transcendental Towers of Babel to be possessed.

If in transcendentalism human reason was perverted in the direction of the abstruse, in scientific positivism, so it seemed to Goethe, it was led astray in yet another way: in turning the universe into a plaything for mathematics and the wilful assertiveness of experimentation, reason once more removed the world out of the reach of true human comprehension. For the truth of human comprehension resides for Goethe in that balanced vision in which the religious, the aesthetic and the moral perceptions are at one. Only through their concord the world stands revealed as the proper home of man, appearing neither too great for his insignificance, nor too small for his greatness; neither too fantastic for his reason, nor too prosaic for his imagination; neither too unwieldy for his will, nor too unlovable for his affection. In a very profound sense of that word, *propriety* is for Goethe the criterion of truth. This is why Nietzsche admired him as the last of the great aristocratic minds of Europe. For there is indeed something plebeian at work in all other standards of truth which have become, articulately or not, the fashion in modern intellectual activities: elements of either self-abasement or rational conceit, of excessive curiosity, of psychological tactlessness, and a sniggering suspicion of the absence of meaning in anything that evades definition or experimental proof, and above all, a dis-

regard for that intangible quality that makes the world a noble habitation.

Goethe's scientific labours were directed and sustained by his intuitive certainty that knowledge can only be true as long as it is not in excess of man's feelings. The problem involved is, of course, an old one, at least as old as modern science itself, and was first lived and struggled through by that extraordinary man, in whom the mind of a mathematician clashed with the mind of a mystic, Pascal. His endless concern was with reason and that reason of which reason knows nothing: the reason of the heart; with the *esprit de géométrie* and the *esprit de finesse*. Since then the question and conflict, in innumerable variations, have never ceased to vex some of the finest minds of Europe. In Goethe's case, however, it can hardly be called a problem. For at bottom he had no doubts about the worthlessness of the *esprit de géométrie*. And where its achievements were beyond dispute, beyond even the negative certainty of Goethe, the utmost homage he was prepared to pay to them was the suggestion that a soul rich with intuition could reach at least as far as the newest telescopes. In the peculiar household of Makarie, the astronomer's business is simply to spot the stars which the lady of the house, harbouring all the galaxies in her breast, has seen in her dreams; an astronomical job not very much superior to that of the digger who digs for the water that the diviner has divined.

But beyond such indulgence of a wayward sense of humour, Goethe is deeply convinced that man can only do justice to himself and to the world and its maker by creating from within an image of both himself and the world which does not clash with his idea of the deity. And Goethe's idea of the deity was given to him in that 'revealed mystery', that 'living and instantaneous revelation of the unfathomable', through the symbolic nature of the particular. From this symbolic nature of the particular, to be grasped only in the concerted receptivity of sense, mind, feeling and will, man was increasingly alienated through the excessive rationalism of both his physics and metaphysics.

The Germans were indeed to look odd to themselves once they woke up to their real status after all the transcending had been done; as odd, one might add, as the scientist, confronted with the all but demonic unmanageability of the results of his analytical radicalism. For what is lost between the extremes of transcendence and analysis is the Goethean ideal of personality: a state of balance between what man *is* and what he *can do*. 'Man ought not to know more of a thing than he can creatively live up to.' Goethe might have said this. It was said by Nietzsche, reflecting on the sterility of philological studies, and comparing the quality of mind of his most learned

colleagues to Goethe's meagre philological equipment; yet, he adds, 'he knew enough to wrestle fruitfully with antiquity!' And elsewhere: 'Goethe's taste and ability ran parallel.' This is a posthumous note from the time of the dithyrambus *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*. Even then he knew what was to become violent polemic in later years: that this could not be said of Richard Wagner. And with the word 'the presumptuous' the remark on Goethe leads on to an observation about Richard Wagner's histrionic character.

Indeed, Nietzsche knew who Goethe was. There is the instruction of Goethe in his turning away from Wagner, the Goethean knowledge that it is the discrepancy between human substance and human virtuosity, between what a man is and what he can do, which is a dominant feature of the Prosaic Age. The Age of Talent may be an alternative name for it. The symptoms are displayed by art and life alike. Life is frightened out of its highly enlightened wits by the return of ancient nightmares: the tales of the magician's apprentice, the dwarfs with magic powers. The promise of Heaven for the poor in spirit is understood to mean that, on earth at least, they should be educated into clever people able to manipulate and let loose the technical installations of hell. And in art, there are sounds most skilfully organized, furies expressed in the most virtuoso fashion, and proud of signifying nothing. Whole systems of aesthetics are evolved to justify this state of affairs. A world emptied of meaning tries to escape from the infinite boredom of its meaninglessness by the magic of words without flesh, and forms without content. Neither things nor ideas must be expressed in poetry, and this is understandable enough; for poetry is enchantment, and all things and thought are robbed of their charm in the bright daylight robbery of utility and abstraction. For Goethe things and thoughts shared that luminous concreteness which is the quality of a world with all its dimensions intact. Remember what he called 'thinking' in a passage of his *Second Sojourn in Rome*, where he describes his impression of Raphael's 'Transfigurazione': 'The kindred spirits among us were confirmed in their convictions,' he writes; 'Raphael, they said to one another, is distinguished by the rightness of his thinking.' And thus he interprets the two levels of being, represented in that painting: 'How can one sever what is above from what is below? The two are one; below there is suffering and neediness, and above active mercy, the one reflecting upon the other in mutual interchange. Is it then, to express the meaning of this painting in a different way, at all possible to separate from the real its ideal relevance?'

In the 'Buch Hafis' of the *West-östlicher Divan* the section which has the motto:

Sei das Wort die Braut genannt  
 Bräutigam der Geist;  
 Diese Hochzeit hat gekannt,  
 Wer Hafisen preist

[Let the word be named: the bride, and the spirit: bridegroom; he who sings in praise of Hafis has known this wedlock] the poet, addressing himself to Hafis, proclaims his faith in a world marked with the imprint of the divine features and sings its praise in defiance of all negation, hindrance, robbery that words and things endure at the hands of the detractors and abstractors:

Und so gleich ich dir vollkommen,  
 Der ich unsrer heil'gen Bücher  
 Herrlich Bild an mich genommen,  
 Wie auf jenes Tuch der Tücher  
 Sich des Herren Bildnis drückte,  
 Mich in stiller Brust erquickte,  
 Trotz Verneinung, Hindrung, Raubens,  
 Mit dem heitern Bild des Glaubens.

[Thus I am your equal, I who have received and taken the glorious vision of our sacred books, and, with the image of the Lord printed on that cloth of cloths, have delighted in the joyful faith, despite negation, hindrance, robbery.]

This, then, is Goethe's belief, or his answer to the problem which is 'more fundamental than the question of the certainty of knowledge': the problem of values. The answer lies in Goethe's realism as understood by Nietzsche. It is the *realism of the symbol*; not of the obscure symbol thrown up by the collective unconscious of the symbolists, invading the husks of dead memories with dreamt and undreamt-of significances; nor of the symbol which refers to abstractions, in the manner of an allegory: the kind of symbol which the young philologist Nietzsche in a preparatory note for the *Birth of Tragedy* regarded as the sign of a dying art because it introduced, furtively and in flimsy disguise, abstract notions into it — but the symbol in its original meaning, defined by Nietzsche in the same note, in a strikingly Goethe-like manner, as 'the language of the universal'. This realism of the symbol is the common property of all great art. It does not strain after an ideal sphere which may redeem the prosaic unworthiness of this world (as Schiller's art does), nor does it seek deliverance from the terror of truth in the healing unreality of the 'schöner Schein' (as the young Nietzsche had learned it from Schopenhauer), nor does it self-consciously call on dreams and nightmares pleasantly or unpleasantly to ruffle the boring smoothness of life's surface. It describes; and in describing it opens our eyes to what really is. And what really is, is not a dream or shadow, nor the

meaningless agony of the Will, nor the abstractions of Reason, but the living revelation of the unfathomable. Yet why should the unfathomable be beautiful? Because it can only be comprehended by the unfathomable, and the only truly unfathomable faculty of man is love. Thus the realism of the symbol becomes the artistic vindication of the reality of a lovable world. 'That something like Spinoza's *amor dei* could be experienced again!' This is a note which Nietzsche, during his most radical Anti-Christ period, made about Goethe.

## 3

At this point we had better return to that passage in Nietzsche's *Götzen-Dämmerung* from which, in quoting it before, we left out the concluding words. After he had called Goethe a 'convinced realist in the midst of an unrealistic age', Nietzsche continues: 'Such a mind, having attained to real freedom, lives at the very centre of all things, with a joyful and confident acceptance of fate, lives in the faith that only the particular in its separateness is objectionable, and that in the wholeness of life everything is affirmed in its holiness — *he no longer denies . . .* There is no higher faith than this: I have baptized it in the name of Dionysus.'

This is very beautiful and true, and shocking only because of Dionysus so suddenly entering an apparently Apolline scene. Goethe, no doubt, would have been baffled by the choice of this godfather, and may have asked for some less inebriating deity to lend him a spiritual hand — Apollo, perhaps, or even Eros. Yet it is precisely this invocation of Dionysus, forced upon Nietzsche (and not only upon him) by his determination to accept and affirm life, which is our theme; and we would lose track of it if we allowed ourselves to be persuaded that it was, as it were, Apollo's child's play for Goethe to persevere in affirmation, or simply due to his superbly fortunate temperament and genius. And our theme would equally be abandoned if we succeeded in no more than showing that the iconoclast Nietzsche surrounded the picture of Goethe with nothing but admiring marginal notes — significant though even this would be. Goethe would not be the author of *Faust* and *Mephistopheles* had he not known — and at times with terrible intimacy — the spirit of denial, of

... Was ist daran zu lesen?  
 Es ist so gut, als wär' es nicht gewesen,  
 Und treibt sich doch im Kreis, als wenn es wäre.  
 Ich liebte mir dafür das Ewig-Leere.

[What can one make of it? It is as good as though it had never been . . . And yet it rushes round in circles, as if it had some real existence. I would prefer instead eternal emptiness],

with its anticipating echoes of Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence of a positivistically self-contained world without any opening into meaning and sense. Indeed, he was only too familiar with the temptation of calling on magical powers to endow a drably disenchanted life with the poignancy of consuming beauty:

Und sollt' ich nicht, sehnsgütiger Gewalt,  
In's Leben ziehn die einzigste Gestalt.

[And shall I not, with all the might of my craving, succeed in bringing to life the uniquely beautiful shape?]

This desire, even if realized only for that one fatal moment of ultimate satisfaction, is Faust's very challenge to the devil. But the challenge is withdrawn at the end, and the *very desire for magical transformation identified with the act of blaspheming and cursing life*:

Könnt' ich Magie von meinem Pfad entfernen,  
Die Zaubersprüche ganz und gar verlernen,  
Stünd ich, Natur, vor dir ein Mann allein,  
Da wär's der Mühe wert, ein Mensch zu sein.  
Das war ich sonst, eh' ich's im Düstern suchte,  
Mit Frevelwort mich und die Welt verfluchte.

[Could I forget my sorcery, and ban my magic, stand, stripped of it utterly, a man, oh Nature! face to face with thee! It might be worth while then to be a man. I was it once, before I searched in the dusky sphere, thus blasphemously cursing the world and myself.]

This rejection of magic is, of course, not merely a poetical and secularized version of the traditional theological disapproval of that activity. Nor has it anything in common with the conventional idea of piety. It simply reflects Goethe's final acceptance of life as it is – only that Goethe's vision of what is, affirms the *reality* of much that in the consciousness of the Prosaic Age is not. Goethe is exemplary in his courage to trust to the absolute reliability of that experiment which, in its utter 'subjectivity', is not merely one of many possible, but the experience of life itself. And at least half of his experiment yields results dismissed by the Prosaic Age with frowning vagueness as 'emotional' or 'mystical':

Sie haben dich, heiliger Hafis,  
Die mystische Zunge genannt,  
Und haben, die Wortgelehrten,  
Den Wert des Worts nicht erkannt.

Mystisch heisstest du ihnen,  
Weil sie Närrisches bei dir denken,  
Und ihren unlautern Wein  
In deinem Namen verschenken.

Du aber bist mystisch rein,  
 Weil sie dich nicht verstehn.  
 Der du, ohne fromm zu sein, selig bist!  
 Das wollen sie dir nicht zugestehn.

[They have called you, Saint Hafis, the mystical tongue; but they have not, the scribes, recognized the meaning of the word. To them you are mystical because you inspire foolish thoughts in them, and because they pour out their impure wine in your name. Indeed, you are mystical, but only because they do not understand you, you who are blessed without being pious. And this they will not allow you.]

This is the poem 'Offenbar Geheimnis' from the *West-östlicher Divan*. Nietzsche might well claim its authorship. It is Goethe's most light-hearted assertion of the oneness of the two spheres, of the revelation of the unfathomable in the reality of the symbol, and of the holiness and blessedness which is the quality of being *really* alive.

The 'ideal' aspect of life, abandoned by transcendentalists and positivists alike to some limbo of ideality, was so inescapably real to Goethe that he was convinced it would one day avenge itself on the age that has banished it from its 'reality'. This brings us to the last of the three aphorisms from *Maximen und Reflexionen* which we have selected to epitomize stages on the precarious journey of the European mind. It is the aphorism which follows immediately upon the definition of the symbol from which this discussion has so far taken its bearings and which it leaves now with one of the last jottings among the posthumously published notes of Nietzsche: 'The interpreters of poets do not understand that the poet has both: the reality and the symbol. Thus he has the first and the second sense of a totality.' This last aphorism reads, once more: 'All that is ideal will ultimately, once it is claimed by the real, consume it, and itself. As paper money does with the silver and itself.' And this is exactly what has happened within the fifty years of the Prosaic Age, between Goethe's death and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. Goethe's realism, on its profoundest level, was driven to despair. And Nietzsche, in order to transform this despair into affirmation, had to call in so un-Goethean a spirit as that of Dionysus. The comparison between the god of Goethe's *amor dei* and Nietzsche's love of Dionysus yields the measure by which we can assess the distance the Prosaic Age has travelled from Goethe's time to Nietzsche's, or the depth to which it has sunk. For with all the radical, and indeed obvious, differences between Goethe and Nietzsche — differences of character, genius, temperament, modes of thought and expression — they nevertheless meet in their concern for, and their vision of the proper state of man. Nietzsche is the outraged believer of Goethe's

beliefs, the scandalized and scandalizing upholder of Goethe's values, fighting out within his own soul the battle between belief and unbelief, accepting for himself the fates of the tortured martyrs of either side, and the role of the adjudicator of victories and defeats.

It is not only Nietzsche's consistent admiration which bears witness to his kinship with Goethe. There is no *internal* evidence either to refute the intellectual sincerity of Nietzsche's repeated assertions that there could not be any by-passing of Goethe when it came to tracing his own intellectual ancestry; and although the names he quotes on the occasions of such stock-taking vary, Goethe is invariably included. In the second volume of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, he writes: 'I too have been in the underworld, like Odysseus and shall be again and again; and not only rams have I sacrificed, but not spared my own blood. There are four pairs that have never denied themselves to me when I made my sacrifices: Epicur and Montaigne, Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, Pascal and Schopenhauer. It is with these that I must come to terms again, each time after a long stretch of lonely wanderings; by them I want to be proved right or wrong, to them I want to listen when they prove one another right or wrong. Whatever I say, conclude, think out for myself and others, it is on those eight that my eyes are fixed . . .' In another place, among the many notes from the time of *Zarathustra*, Goethe is again one of his ancestors, this time together with Heraclitus and Spinoza. And in one of his own posthumously published critical comments on the writings of his early period, Goethe is thanked for having freed him from the pessimistic tyranny of Schopenhauer and Wagner: 'Now antiquity dawned upon me and Goethe's insight into the nature of great art, and now I gained that *simplicity* of vision to see what human existence *really* is; I had the antidote to make sure that it did not turn into poisoning pessimism.'

In *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, in one of the loveliest passages ever written on the *moral* task and function of literature (and, indeed, there is not much loveliness to be found in the repertoire of writers on this austere subject), the imprint of Goethe's genius is recognizable in every phrase: 'The works of such poets' — poets, that is, whose vision of man is exemplary — 'would be distinguished by the fact that they appear immune from the glow and blast of the *passions*. The fatal touch of the wrong note, the pleasure taken in smashing the whole instrument on which the music of humanity has been played, the scornful laughter and the gnashing of teeth, and all that is tragic and comic in the old conventional sense, would be felt in the vicinity of this new art as an awkward archaic crudeness and a distortion of the image of man. Strength, goodness, gentleness, purity, and that innate and spontaneous sense of measure and balance

shown in persons and their actions, . . . a clear sky reflected on faces and events, knowledge and art at one; the mind, without arrogance and jealousy dwelling together with the soul, drawing from the opposites of life the grace of seriousness, not the impatience of conflict: — all this would make the background of gold against which to set up the real portrait of man, the picture of his increasing nobleness.'

This, quite consistently, is written by the same Nietzsche who has listed the best books in German prose, reserving no place for either the tumultuous Kleist or the brilliant Heine or any of the Romantics, but choosing, apart from Goethe and Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann, as the only works which deserve to be read again and again: Lichtenberg's Aphorisms, the first book of Jung-Stilling's Autobiography, Adalbert Stifter's *Nachsommer* and Gottfried Keller's *Leute von Seldwyla* ('and this is likely to remain all there is, for some time to come'). But is it, one wonders, written by the same Nietzsche who has appealed to what is most immature in the popular imagination of his country, and largely antagonized that of the West, by 'philosophizing with a hammer', proclaiming himself dynamite, preaching the advent of the Superman? How is one to reconcile this violent mind with that Nietzsche whom we have observed painting, against a background of gold, the Goethean picture of man 'immune from the glow and blast of the passions'?

Throughout Nietzsche's life, and not merely from a certain point onward, his acclamations of Goethe, the dominant voice indeed, are yet interspersed with misgivings. They are invariably concerned with the Goethe-Winckelmann idea of Greek antiquity and with Goethe's 'purely epic' genius' which, according to Nietzsche, rendered him incapable of facing the problem of tragedy. He might have added, as a source of anxiety, the nature of Goethe's opposition to modern science.

As early as 1870, while he was writing his *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche enters in his notebook the following remark: 'With Goethe, in accordance with his epic nature, poetry is the remedy, protecting him from full knowledge; with tragic natures art is the remedy, liberating them from knowledge.' All that Nietzsche ever said in criticism of Goethe is contained in this observation of the young philologist. Seven to eight years later, at the time of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, it is applied to Goethe's reaction to Kleist: 'What Goethe felt at coming into contact with him was his sense of tragedy. Goethe turned his back on it; for tragedy represents the incurable aspect of nature. He himself was conciliatory and curable.' At the same time, after some rather unfortunate gibes about 'the tragic problem' of *Faust*, Nietzsche exclaims: 'Is this really the greatest German "tragic idea"', as the rumour goes among Germans?'

These criticisms, clearly, are not determined by purely aesthetic considerations. Nietzsche was utterly incapable of dividing up his thought into any such neat academical departments. He once said: 'I have at all times written with my whole body and my whole life. I do not know what purely intellectual problems are.' And again: 'You know these things by way of thinking, yet your thought is not your experience, but the reverberation of the experience of others; as your room trembles when a car passes. I am sitting in that car, and often am the car itself.' Thus Nietzsche's criticism of Goethe can be seen as part and parcel of his total strategy: the strategy of despair. Towards the end of his conscious life Nietzsche was convinced that the culture of Europe was doomed; that an eclipse of all traditional values was at hand, and that modern European man, this pampered child of the optimistically rational eighteenth century, would needs go astray in a wilderness without path or guidance. He quoted Pascal, who said that without the Christian belief we shall become to ourselves what nature and history will become to us—a monster and a chaos. We, he adds, shall make this prophecy come true. The sections of his *Will to Power* which are concerned with the coming of European nihilism, read like a vast elaboration of that dictum of Pascal's as well as of Goethe's prophecy of the Prosaic Age. Nietzsche believed that its approach was *inevitable*. But the paradox, which is the very life of true prophecy, also sustained—until madness possessed him—the prophet Nietzsche; that prophetic paradox within which historical inevitability is defeated through an act of spiritual conquest: 'God has decided to destroy the Temple. In the name of God, rescue the Temple from the wrath of God.' This is the paradox of every true prophet.

What was inevitable, according to Nietzsche's prophecy, was the coming of nihilism. The conqueror, more powerful than fate itself, was the Dionysian spirit, the spirit that ruled Greek tragedy. The Dionysus of Greek tragedy transformed the despair at the fate of man into the bliss of ultimate acceptance, thus transcending the very thing it accepted. There is an amazing consistency running right through Nietzsche's wild contradictions. The young philologist and philosopher had, in the *Birth of Tragedy*, celebrated the god of ecstasy, redeeming the spectacle of man's ultimate failure in the rapturously accepted wholeness of life in which there is nothing but ultimate succeeding. The writer of the *Will to Power*, seventeen years later, demanded from European man that he should perform the very same drama on the stage of the world and, caught in the doom of his historical fate, transcend it through the act of tragic affirmation.

For him who believed he had recognized this, *Faust* could no longer stand as the 'tragedy of knowledge', 'die Tragödie des

Erkennenden'. Salvation was no longer to be had from the 'Ewig-Weibliche'. This was still merely comfort, a religious illusion hiding the mercilessness from above against which not man, in his weak and fallen state, will assert himself, but only the creature graced with the grace of Dionysus: the Superman. As far as man is concerned, no *chorus mysticus* concludes Nietzsche's 'tragedy of knowledge', but Mephistopheles:

Kein Weg! Ins Unbetretene,  
Nicht zu Betretende; ein Weg ans Unerbetene,  
Nicht zu Erbittende. Bist du bereit?—  
Nicht Schlosser sind, nicht Riegel wegzuschieben,  
Von Einsamkeiten wirst umhergetrieben.  
Hast du Begriff von Öd' und Einsamkeit?

Nichts wirst du sehen in ewig leerer Ferne.  
Den Schritt nicht hören, den du tust,  
Nichts Festes finden, wo du ruhst.

[No way! Towards untrodden ground, where none may tread; a way towards the unprayed-for, beyond all prayer. Are you prepared? There are no locks, no bolts to thrust aside; you will be driven hither and thither by multitudes of loneliness. Do you know what void and loneliness mean? . . . You will see nothing in that distance of eternal emptiness, you will not hear your own step, find nothing solid for your rest.]

In those voids, the first sound that will be heard again, indeed be met by the resonance of a transfigured world, will be the voice of the Superman. He will find the firmest of all footholds precisely where man loses the ground under his feet.

To insist on the Mephistophelean prospect, and yet not to despair, and yet to glorify, indeed to transfigure existence — this is the goal of Nietzsche's desperate strategy. He was determined to go to the very end of the positivist disillusionment, shed skin after skin of comforting beliefs, destroy every fortress manned with protective gods, in fact, to banish the last vestiges of 'magic' which still save man from the final exposure to his tragedy — and *then* bring to life once more Goethe's vision of the glorious integrity of all things. Until this was done, even the nearest German approximation to Dionysian acceptance, even Goethe, would fail us. For he had an inclination to play truant when life was teaching its most desperate lessons — and indeed it was about to teach them to Europe. At the approach of the terror of ultimate knowledge, Goethe withdrew into the healing darkness of the unconscious, trusting to intuition that it would restore the brightness of day in the created work of art. But Nietzsche dreamt — and dreamt in vain — of an artist of the future who would reach in his

art that turning-point where the highest degree of consciousness and self-consciousness transforms itself into a new spontaneity, primitivity and innocence; just as he strove to realize the utmost of nihilistic despair to arrive at a new faith, and mobilized all forces of negation to defeat all denial. In one of the last paragraphs of *The Will to Power* he says: 'To have paced out the whole circumference of modern consciousness, to have explored every one of its recesses — this is my ambition, my torture, and my bliss. Really to overcome pessimism — ; and as a result, *ein Goethischer Blick voll Liebe und gutem Willen.*'

The desperate *experimentum crucis* failed desperately, Nietzsche's tragic failure is spiritual impatience. He was a Faustian, after all, in his deep-rooted belief that at the beginning was the deed. But it is certainly not in the end, and this increases the probability that it was not at the beginning either. He saw the end and took the initiative. Even the words suggest that this is incongruous. He had before him a world without faith or hope or love; and how much was he of the nineteenth century, upon which he prided himself, having outstripped, in attempting to create from his own impatience that trinity of spiritual survival which is 'all in the waiting'. From the goodness of his heart he believed

. . . such is the infection of the time,  
That, for the health and physic of our right,  
We cannot deal but with the very hand  
Of stern injustice and confused wrong.

But such war-like preparations have a habit of producing the precise state in which the 'paper money consumes the silver and itself'. Nietzsche, with an intellectual courage, penetration and impatience which have no equal in the nineteenth century, made himself, with the most splendid invocations, the claimant of the ideal on behalf of the real; but in his time and place, already so hopelessly exposed, he merely succeeded in vindicating Goethe's prophecy that this will be the point at which the severed spheres consume each other.

## THE THYNNE AFFAIR

J. C. HARDWICK

IN Westminster Abbey stands a monument erected to the memory of Mr Thomas Thynne, who was murdered in Pall Mall on February 12th, 1682. A plaque on the monument depicts three horsemen surrounding a coach, into which one of them discharges a pistol. Thynne, the owner of Longleat, Wiltshire, was immensely wealthy and a prominent member of the 'country' or opposition party in the latter part of the reign of Charles II. But the outrage was not political; it was a tragedy of passion, which makes it more interesting from a human standpoint.

The story begins as far back as 1670, when the eleventh Earl of Northumberland died, leaving as his sole issue a girl of three, Elizabeth, as heiress to the vast Percy estates. Under his Will, his widow (but only so long as she remained unmarried) had custody of the child. Should she marry again, the Dowager Countess, the Earl's mother, was to take charge of her. As the young widow was a famous beauty, and had six thousand a year in her own right (and seventeenth-century money values may be multiplied by four to give the modern equivalent) a second marriage was more than probable; and in 1673 the lady became the wife of Ralph Montague, English Ambassador in Paris.

No sooner had the marriage taken place than the Dowager insisted upon her rights and sent a peremptory demand for the surrender of the little Elizabeth, now six years old. The young Countess attempted to bargain, but the old lady insisted upon the child being surrendered unconditionally. Having secured custody of her, the Dowager trained her to treat her mother with indifference.

As Elizabeth was sole heiress to the vast Percy properties, which included Northumberland House in London and Petworth in the country, there was likely to be some competition for her hand, especially as she already gave promise of all and more than all her mother's beauty. On the principle that nothing is to be gained by delay, the Dowager decided upon an early marriage, and by the time Elizabeth was eleven, a bridegroom had been chosen — a youth aged fifteen, Henry Cavendish, Earl of Ogle, son and heir to the Duke of Newcastle. The two children were married in strict privacy, without the little bride writing even to inform her mother of the event. The bridegroom cannot have been selected for his looks, for Lady Sunderland wrote that he was 'as ugly as anything young can be'.

After about eighteen months, however, the poor boy died of 'the new fever' (an epidemic then sweeping the country) 'lamented by all his relations, and by his Lady extremely'. The marriage problem would thus have to be faced all over again, and the Dowager may be excused for now wishing to share her responsibilities, and for appointing as her co-guardian a certain Colonel Brett, a gentleman of good family who had married Katherine, the Dowager's niece.

It is at this point that Mr Thomas Thynne enters the story. He was now (1681) thirty-two and still a bachelor. Owner of Longleat in Wiltshire, he was reckoned one of the richest men in England, and was popularly known as Tom of the Ten Thousand. The wealth of the young Percy heiress united to his own would have elevated him into one of the leading political figures of the day, and Northumberland House would have become an influential *salon* for the Whigs. The sole obstacle to a marriage between Lady Elizabeth and Mr Thynne was the Dowager herself, who insisted that her granddaughter should marry a title.

But Thynne thought he saw in the new co-guardian, Colonel Brett, a possible means of approach, for although of good family this gentleman was of modest fortune, and might be open to a certain kind of persuasion. Thynne therefore bought a property near Thame for five thousand pounds, and intimated to Brett that this should be his in return for his support in the matter of the marriage.

Young ladies at this period were usually quite willing to marry anyone within reason whom their parents or guardians thought suitable, but as ill luck would have it, Lady Elizabeth, now in her fifteenth year, had been fascinated by a remarkable young man who had recently come to London and created a sensation by his good looks, valour, wealth, and other accomplishments — Count John Charles Koenigsmarck. The young Count (he was twenty-two) had brought to the Court of Charles II a letter of introduction from the King of Sweden. Called 'the handsomest man in Europe', this paladin had fought in the wars all over Europe, and had even charmed the ladies of Madrid by entering the arena, and sustaining the part of matador in a bull-fight. His father was the famous Swedish general, and his uncle the celebrated Count Otto Koenigsmarck, Field Marshal of France and afterwards Governor of Swedish Pomerania. In London, though all the women were infatuated with this splendid figure of romance, the young man himself had no eyes for any but the lovely young Lady Ogle (the title by which Lady Elizabeth was now known).

The intrepid youth approached the Dowager, but received a rebuff; the old lady barred all foreigners. The Count accepted her decision, and announced that he would leave England. At that time the English garrison at Tangier was in its usual straits (it was shortly

afterwards withdrawn — Pepys was one of the commission that decided on this), reinforcements were being sent out, and the disappointed lover joined them, no doubt telling Elizabeth that he would return to lay fresh laurels at her feet.

Meanwhile Mr Thynne was not idle, paying frequent visits to Colonel Brett's house at Richmond. Here he would be sure of meeting the young heiress, for the girl was fond of Lady Katherine, and would often go over to Richmond from Syon House, the Percy mansion near Kew. At this time Elizabeth was still officially in mourning for the young Earl of Ogle, and the visits to Richmond were her sole excursions into society (being of the nature of family gatherings, they were permitted); thus Thynne had a clear field for the time being. He had a good ally in Lady Katherine, who was constantly singing his praises to Elizabeth, and he made such good use of his opportunities that the girl, after some hesitation, consented to become his bride. He declared he was in transports of happiness, and sent off post for his own parson from Wiltshire, who rode night and day, so as to avoid all delay.

We may assume that a desire to be free from the domination of her grandmother was a predominant motive with Lady Elizabeth in accepting Mr Thynne. She would now be a grand lady, mistress of Longleat, Petworth, Northumberland House and Syon House, instead of being under the thumb of the tyrannical old lady.

Lady Elizabeth's second marriage took place privately in Syon House in July 1681, the bride being given away by Lord Powerscourt, Lady Katherine's brother-in-law. The Dowager had given her consent to the match, but refused to be actually present at the ceremony, remaining in an adjoining room. And when the wedding was over she insisted on account of the bride's extreme youth, and her recent bereavement, that the wedded pair were not for the present to live together as man and wife. Thynne, though he had been in a great hurry to get the wedding over, offered no objections to this course, though it was naturally a great disappointment to Elizabeth to have to return with her grandmother to the dismal splendour and dreary subjection of Northumberland House, from which mansion she had looked forward to driving the old lady.

Under the circumstances it is not difficult to understand that no sooner was Elizabeth married to Mr Thynne than she began to regret it and to wonder whether the fatal step could not be retraced. Not the least of her misfortunes was that she had no one to advise her. Her mother was now practically a stranger with a new family of her own; Lady Katherine, Colonel Brett's wife, she no longer trusted: her grandmother she regarded in the light of an enemy. But she now found a new friend in Dorothy Lady Temple, the authoress, as Dorothy Osborne, of that series of love letters which show that

in a corrupt society there were still individuals who remained uncorrupted. To her, now an experienced woman of fifty-three, Lady Elizabeth imparted the secret of her marriage.

Lady Temple took counsel with her husband, Sir William — till lately English Ambassador at the Hague—and with Henry Sidney, a forty-year-old bachelor cousin of Lady Elizabeth's, who was to be Sir William Temple's successor at the Hague. As a result of her consultations she gave Elizabeth the amazing advice to bolt. At all costs the girl must be placed out of Thynne's reach with a view to the marriage being annulled. The place of refuge was to be the Hague, where both Sir William and Sidney had great influence.

One morning early in November, at nine o'clock, Lady Elizabeth left Northumberland House in her own coach to go to Lombard Street 'to buy some plate and other things at a goldsmith's'. But instead she drove to the Old Exchange, where she left the coach and ordered the coachmen and footmen to wait for her. Then, taking her page with her, she entered the Exchange, and got rid of the lad on a pretext. She then joined Lady Temple and her woman Mrs. Stanhope, who were waiting for her and brought her to where Henry Sidney had a coach ready. All four then drove down to Gravesend, where a vessel was about to sail for Holland. As Lady Betty was entirely without ready money, Sidney lent her a hundred guineas in cash, and gave her a note of hand on the Hague for a thousand pounds. In addition he sent with her to Holland his own steward, butler, cook and servants, who should attend her at his own house at the Hague, whither he himself would be coming shortly.

But in laying their plans the Temples and Sidney overlooked one vital factor in the situation — Koenigsmarck. No sooner did the Count hear of Elizabeth's flight than he rushed over sea and land to be with her; and his presence, though it might delight her, was gravely embarrassing to her friends, and a real gift to her enemies, for whom it provided a specious explanation of her desertion of her lawful husband.

Thynne himself lost no time in opening a Restitution Suit, and as the Thame transaction might prove very damaging if it came to light, careful steps were taken to cover up all traces of it. The means taken came to light twenty-one years later, when the matter came before the House of Lords in a suit *re* the Brett estates:

Brett, upon a secret promise of its restitution, delivered up the conveyance merely to enable him to purge himself of the matters required by the Lady Ogle's interrogatories. After Brett had given evidence, a fresh conveyance was drawn up and executed in the same terms as the previous one for the colourable consideration of £3650, Brett giving a note for that amount

which was afterwards redelivered to him without his paying a penny.

Such ingenuity deserved success and Thynne won his suit. The effect upon Koenigsmarck, who had been counting upon the annulment and his speedy union with the heiress, was catastrophic; he decided that his rival must be got out of the way by foul means if fair proved insufficient. His first active step was to send a challenge, making no secret of the fact that he intended to kill his enemy. He sent the challenge to London by the hand of one Captain Vratz — a sort of *fidus Achates* who had attached himself to him. Vratz was a soldier of fortune, the son of a Pomeranian landowner. Left in poor circumstances, he had turned highwayman, his final exploit in following this profession being to hold up the famous John Sobiesky, Polish hero and vanquisher of the Turks. The diamonds taken on this occasion were sold to a Jew in Venice for above eight thousand ducatoons, and enabled Vratz to purchase a commission in the Imperial service.

But as the laws of honour permitted a husband to ignore the challenge of his wife's lover, Thynne took no notice of the Count's missive. Baulked of his purpose, the Count resolved upon more desperate measures still. About the middle of January 1682, he left the Hague for London in the company of Vratz, travelling incognito. The sole man in London who knew of his coming was a Swede named Hanson, tutor to the Count's younger brother Philip, who was being educated in London at the Academy of Major Foubert. The Count at first took lodgings in the Haymarket, but this proving too public, he moved to Rupert Street, and from there (as the chimney smoked) to St Martin's Lane. Vratz took up his abode in King Street, Westminster. Koenigsmarck lay very low in his lodgings, never going out by day, but sitting in night-cap and dressing-gown, ostensibly on account of a distemper he had contracted at Tangier. He was visited by a Swedish physician named Harder.

Meanwhile Vratz was busy. On his previous visit to London with the challenge he had made friends with an unemployed Swedish soldier of fortune named Stern, at a Dutch ordinary — the City of Amsterdam. Vratz had attached this man to him by promises and money, and he now re-established contact with him, and sounded him with regard to the putting away of a gentleman with whom he had a quarrel, offering a reward of '200, nay, 300 dollars'. But Stern seemed unwilling to take the risk. Then early in February, there came to London a 'Polander' named Borasky. The young Count Philip had been expecting this man, who was to serve him as a groom. His coming had been much delayed by storms at sea, and when he arrived Hanson took him to Count Charles

Koenigsmarck, and told the man that this was the master whom he was to serve. Borasky seems to have been a simple soul — pious as well as stupid, an easy prey for knaves like Hanson, and unscrupulous desperadoes like Vratz. The Count handed him over to Vratz, with instructions to obey him in all things without question. A riding coat was purchased for him, and also a sword — 'a horseman's sword as broad as two fingers, such as the Gentlemen of the Guard wear'. On coming to his lodgings after his first interview with his new master, Borasky (as he confessed afterwards) 'said the Lord's Prayer', doubtless feeling that he had fallen among scoundrels.

Vratz's plans were now complete, and on Sunday, February 12th, about one o'clock, he sent for Borasky and told him a cock and bull story about himself and the Count having been attacked by bravoes at the instigation of a gentleman who was the Count's enemy. 'I am now come hither,' concluded Vratz, 'to attack that gentleman in the open streets as a murderer, and as he hath begun, so I will make an end.' The Captain then gave Borasky a musketoon, a formidable weapon discharging a number of slugs, and certain to inflict a fatal wound at short range, and added his instructions: 'When we go out together, if I stop a coach, do you fire into it, and then follow me.' The poor Pole scrupled to promise obedience on the natural ground that if they were taken in such an act they would 'come to a very ill end'. But Vratz reassured him by telling him that it was the law in England, as in actual fact it was in Poland, that a servant was not punished for what he did by his master's orders.

Vratz, who lived in some style and kept four servants, had a watch kept on Thynne's movements. This afternoon he received information that his victim was going in his coach to Northumberland House. The Captain immediately pulled on his boots, and gave his man orders to take his stuff to the Black Bull in Holborn, and to bring the horses there also. He and Borasky then took chairs to the Black Bull, where Stern joined them. They prepared their weapons, and there was some argument over the charging of the musketoon. Vratz with his usual recklessness wanted fifteen bullets to be put in, and when Stern pointed out that this would endanger the lives of coachman and footmen, cried 'It matters not for that!' But common sense prevailed, and the weapon was charged with five or six slugs only, 'wrapped up in rags, with resin powdered which would not burn.' Pistols also were loaded and the trio set out, the Pole carrying the musketoon. It was now six o'clock and nearly dark. They inquired their way to Temple Bar and were seen to ride through the Strand to St James's.

There was one complication. Word had come that Monmouth might be in the coach with Thynne, in which case the murder would

be postponed. Vratz gave Borasky express orders not to fire till he gave the word.

The technique of holding up a coach was quite simple, especially if there were two or three men. The waylayers waited by the side of the road or street till the vehicle came up, then one of them would bring his horse across the path of the coach, while his colleague threatened the driver with a pistol. On this occasion it was dark, and the coach was proceeding at a foot-pace with a man going ahead with a flambeau. It was Stern who blocked the road, while Vratz bade the driver halt with the words, 'Stop, you dog!' At the same time Borasky discharged the musketoon into the coach, the unfortunate occupant receiving the charge in belly and groin. Before the smoke had cleared the three horsemen rode off, with the footman and his torch pelting after them up the street yelling, 'Murder'. One of the fugitives kept crying 'A chase, a chase!' as if to explain their hurry. Meanwhile poor Thynne was carried to his lodgings. The time was about a quarter past eight, and the exact locality of the outrage would seem to have been a spot in Pall Mall in front of the present United Services Club or between it and the Carlton Hotel.

News of the outrage was soon all over London and caused extreme consternation. Thynne, as one of the foremost Protestant leaders, was popular in London, and this attack upon him was at once interpreted politically and attributed to the Jesuits, for the Popish Plot scare had scarcely yet died down. Charles II himself was appalled, as well he might be, knowing what use would be made by his enemies of this murder of one of their number. But happily the King had at hand a staunch, intelligent and incorruptible servant in Sir John Reresby, Magistrate for the City. This hard-headed and courageous Yorkshireman whose *Memoirs* are our chief authority for what now transpired, was responsible for clearing up the affair.

Thynne's friends, the Duke of Monmouth, Lords Cavendish and Mordaunt, besides others rushed from Whitehall to the victim's bedside. Hither Reresby was summoned by Monmouth to grant search warrants. Poor Thynne was in a dying condition, and was attended by his friend Dr Tenison, Vicar of St. Martin's in the Fields, and afterwards Primate. He remained with Thynne practically the whole time till his death at six the next morning, and it is noteworthy that, though there is a full account of the conversation between the two, Thynne said nothing about his runaway bride, but declared more than once that he could not imagine from whom this stroke had come.

At this period the Justice of the Peace united in his own person the roles of detective and policeman as well as of examining magistrate. He made his arrests in person, which often called for great personal

courage. In fact his duties resembled those of a Sheriff in a mining Californian township in the gold-rush of 1849.

Search warrants were issued, and the first person to be examined by Reresby was the chairman who had conveyed Vratz and Borasky from King Street to Holborn. Information was also given by a woman with whom Vratz had had relations. A search of the King Street lodging, however, yielded nothing, though one of the captain's men was found and taken into custody. Under pressure this man admitted that he served 'a gentleman, a German captain, who had told him he had a quarrel with Mr Thynne, and had often appointed him to watch his coach as it passed by'. That day, as soon as he knew the coach had gone, the captain had booted himself and with two others, a Swedish lieutenant and a Polander, had gone, as he supposed, in quest of Mr Thynne on horseback. He also gave information as to where he thought the captain and the two others might be found.

Then followed an all-night search, in which Monmouth, Mordaunt and the others, as well as Reresby, took part. It was not until six o'clock in the morning that the party came to the physician Harder's house in Leicester Fields. Reresby tells us that Vratz was known to be a man of desperate courage, he had 'commanded the forlorn hope at the seige of Mons, where only two besides himself came off with life, of fifty under his command'. But the magistrate went boldly up the stairs to the room where the captain was lying. His sword lay at some distance from him on a table, and this Sir John seized, and then the man's person, committing him to the constables. 'I wondered to see him yield himself so tamely,' comments Reresby, 'being certainly a man of great courage; for he appeared unconcerned from the beginning, notwithstanding he was very certain to be found the chief actor in the tragedy.'

Harder as a suspect was placed under arrest along with the captain, while Stern and Borasky were taken soon afterwards, and all brought to Reresby's house for examination. But so anxious was the King to put an end to wild rumours that he had all the prisoners brought to Whitehall to be examined by himself personally. The examinations yielded the fact that Koenigsmarck, who on a previous visit to London had made addresses to the Lady Ogle, had come into England incognito ten days before the murder, and had lain disguised till it was committed. A search of the Count's lodgings revealed the fact that he had left early on the morning after the murder. It was found that Vratz had been intimate with Koenigsmarck for the past eight years. The Captain, however, protested that though he had acted out of friendship for the Count, he had done so without his privity.

Orders were now given to the Postmaster General to send expresses

to all seaport towns to prevent Koenigsmarck leaving the country, and his description was circulated in the *Gazette*, and a reward of £200 offered by the Government, to which Sir Thomas Thynne, the murdered man's heir, added a further £500. But it was thought by most that he had already got away, for a sloop which had 'rid for three weeks at Deptford' was not to be found, though strict inquiry had been made for it and all wind-bound vessels between Gravesend and Dover were searched.

Meanwhile the Count had in fact found refuge in the house of one Derek Raynes, a Swedish sea captain, at Rotherhithe, where he remained for three days (i.e. from the Monday, February 13th till Thursday the 16th). At ten o'clock at night on the latter date he and Raynes went down the river with a sculler named Chappel, who was told that the Count was a jeweller's apprentice in pursuit of a junior apprentice who had run away. The Count's plan was to sail from Gravesend on the Monday morning in a vessel bound for Holland, the *Good Hope*. On Friday he reached Greenwich, and Greenhithe on Saturday; his intention being to go ashore at Gravesend on Sunday night and join the ship early the next morning. These dilatory tactics were due to the fact that the vessel was not due to sail till the Monday, and it would not be safe to go aboard her until she was actually weighing anchor, owing to the searches which were being made aboard all the vessels in the river.

The Count would undoubtedly have got clear away but for the interference of Raynes's wife, who was convinced all along that the mysterious lodger was the wanted man advertised in the *Gazette*, though her husband (who knew perfectly well who Koenigsmarck was), pooh-poohed the idea. After Raynes and the Count had left on Thursday night, she imparted her suspicions to a waterman in Monmouth's service, and he, in company with a man named Kid, a former employee of Thynne's, and another of Monmouth's retainers named Gibbon, secured a warrant, and organized a chase. They were successful in arresting Koenigsmarck just as he came ashore at Gravesend on the Sunday night.

He was taken back to Whitehall by water under guard that same night, the journey lasting from midnight till six o'clock in the morning. There followed an examination before the King in Council, and again before Lord Chief Justice Pemberton, the Attorney General and Reresby. 'He appeared before the King,' writes Reresby, 'with all the assurance imaginable; he was a fine gentleman of his person; his hair was the longest for a man's I ever saw, for it came below his waist, and his parts were very quick.' Much to his disgust, he was committed to Newgate by Pemberton.

Though all Thynne's powerful friends were thirsting for the Count's blood, certain other interests were working in his favour.

The King, satisfied that the murder had not been a political one, and perhaps not sorry to have Thynne out of the way, had no desire to see the Count grace the gallows. 'This night I was with the King at his going to bed,' writes Reresby, 'where, discoursing as to this matter, I found he was willing Count Coningsmark might come off.' Foreign ambassadors were pleading with His Majesty, and the Duchess of Portsmouth united her intercessions with theirs. But the strongest of the Count's allies was his gold, which he freely lavished in bribes. Luttrell, in his 'Brief Historical Relation' records that,

One Mr B., a woollen draper in Covent Garden, who was warned to be on Count Koningsmarck's tryall jury, was askt if 500 guineas would doe him any harm, if he would acquit the Count. But there being jury besides enough, he was not called; yet this he has attested.

Koenigsmarck even sent Major Foubert to attempt to buy the incorruptible Reresby.

At the Sessions held at Hicks Hall, a true bill was found against Vratz, Stern, and Borasky as principals to the murder, and against the Count as accessory. The trial took place at the Old Bailey on February 28th, and lasted from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Sir Francis Pemberton presided, and the jury was a mixed one of English and foreigners, the evidence being interpreted. The Count from a list in his hand successfully challenged a number of jurors.

At this period the judiciary did not enjoy its present independence, and a Judge was guided by his Royal master's wishes. In this case Charles had no wish to see Koenigsmarck condemned. In his examination, the Count had excused his 'lying low' on the pretext of sickness, and his having absconded, by the desire not to be implicated in an affair in which his association with Vratz might expose him to suspicion. Apart from the evidence of the other prisoners, there was nothing convincing against him, and this evidence the Judge did his best to smother, by not allowing the sworn statements of the prisoners to be read. Vratz in any case would say nothing to implicate his friend, and accepted responsibility for the whole affair. The Count himself was not cross-examined at all. Moreover, Sir Nathaniel Johnson, the interpreter, took advantage of his position to address the Judge in the Count's favour. The Count, on being given leave to make a statement, contented himself with a declaration of his love for England and his zeal for the Protestant religion. After an hour's absence the jury brought in a verdict of guilty against Vratz and the two others, and of not guilty against the Count, 'to the no small wonder of the auditory'. Reresby was the first to carry the news to the King, who 'was not displeased that it had passed in this manner'.

Monmouth and his friends, however, were 'extremely concerned that the Count did escape', and Lord Cavendish resolved to challenge him to fight. But Koenigsmarck managed to get out of the country three days after the trial, and Charles had a writ of *ne exeat regnum* served upon both Cavendish and Mordaunt to prevent their following him abroad. From the way he managed the affair, it was clear that Koenigsmarck did not wish to meet his enemies; his nerve may have been shaken by his recent experiences; in any case his sole desire was to get back to Lady Elizabeth.

But of course a marriage was now quite out of the question. London society of that day could tolerate a good deal, but to marry a husband's murderer, though such a case had been known, was not to be thought of. Henry Sidney would doubtless make this quite clear to his charming young cousin. The pair were for a few days together in the Hague, and then Elizabeth left with Sidney for London. So far as is known, they never met again, though there were rumours a month or two later that the Count was in London in disguise. Four years afterwards, he was killed in the Morea, while serving under his uncle Field Marshal Otto, against the Turks.

A new husband had to be found, and that speedily, for the young heiress, for so much wealth could not be suffered to go unappropriated. The Duchess of Cleveland put forward her son by His Majesty, Elizabeth's senior by a couple of years; but the girl declared with too little politeness, that 'she would wed no bastard'. The choice in the end fell upon Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset. He was twenty, and eligible in every way. They were married on May 30th, less than four months after the murder. But even in her third marriage the lady's troubles were not over. In August she fell ill of the smallpox and her life was despaired of, and it was her mother, so long despised and rejected, that came to her bedside. She recovered, but 'her beauty is gone, for she is much marked', delightedly wrote one of the Countess of Rutland's gossips. The young Duchess survived to bear her husband no less than fifteen children, and in the reign of Queen Anne, she became the hated rival of the all-powerful Duchess of Marlborough.

Captain Vratz made a good end, and by his cheerful and undismayed bearing in the face of death, astonished even Reresby. He took all the blame upon himself, and when urged to make a further confession declared that 'he considered it sufficient if he confessed his sins to God, and that he thought it a piece of popery to press him to confess'. He declared also to a clergyman who ministered to him that he was 'confident that God would consider a gentleman and deal with him suitably to the condition and profession he had placed him in'.

Thynne having been buried in Westminster Abbey on the night of

March 9th, the execution took place on the day following. The gallows was erected in Pall Mall, on the very spot of the murder. Reresby was present and observes:

The captain died without any expression of fear, or laying any guilt upon Count Coningsmark. Seeing me in my coach as he passed by in the cart to execution, he bowed to me with a steady look, as he did to those he knew among the spectators, before he was turned off.

The Duke of Monmouth, who was to meet a worse fate with less fortitude in a few years' time,

attended by several persons of quality was pleased to see justice done upon the inhumane murderers of his deceased friend; having for that purpose taken a balcony over against the place where they were executed.

Koenigsmarck, having left his friend to die, did at least have the grace to care for his funeral, using his influence at Court to get permission for the body to be taken abroad. Evelyn went to see the corpse, and was much impressed by the richness of the coffin, and by the skill with which the body had been embalmed. The flesh being 'florid, soft, and full, as if the person were only sleeping'.

As for Borasky, to him was allotted the distinction of having his body tarred and hung in chains at Mile End, 'being the road from the sea where most of the foreign nations doe land'.

## PASCAL'S POLITICS

VINCENT BURANELLI

PASCAL's ideas on society and the state are an integral, if not central, part of his philosophy. He was not a political theorist in the sense of Hobbes or Bossuet, any more than he was a rigorous metaphysician like Aquinas or Kant. His thought was too closely attached to revealed religion as its *primum mobile* to permit of a systematic rational development except in mathematics and experimental science, and he had certain reservations about the independence even of these disciplines. But this theological orientation, instead of contracting his mind within the framework of strictly religious belief, necessarily led him beyond it, for his principles of religion ramified into every field of human experience. His philosophy was intensely personal; in a sense he was a Christian Existentialist before time. It was the religious element in his thought which prevented him from following a temperamental inclination to work out a scheme of life for himself while remaining indifferent to the rest of humanity. He saw that if his analysis of the religious problem was true, its implications were of the same overriding importance to other men as to himself, and he felt a moral compulsion to point this out to them. This is why he wanted not merely to discover the truth but also to persuade his opponents to see and accept it. To this end he took up all the major facets of the subject, theological, philosophical and psychological, in order to show in each case the effects produced by faith, or the want of it. The argument is based on the convergence of probabilities, a method somewhat similar to that later employed by Newman, so that the Pascalian dialectic has an internal consistency of its own. Communal life is one field in which the effects of faith manifest themselves; thus a consideration of society was strictly relevant to Pascal's argument.

The social problem is derivative from the more general problem of human nature because the way in which an individual behaves with others is largely explicable by what he is in himself. Pascal's treatment of the condition of man in society begins, therefore, with the prior problem of the condition of man in the world. This condition is a mean between two extremes, between the infinitely great and the infinitely small, or between the universe and the atom. What differentiates man from the rest of the world is his rationality. In Pascal's familiar image, man is a *thinking reed*, a being who is but an insignificant part of the immensity which is the universe, and yet greater than the totality which confronts him so terrifyingly because the

possessor of reason which it lacks. 'Man', he says, 'is but a reed, weakest in nature, but a reed which thinks. It needs not that the whole universe should arm to crush him. A vapour, a drop of water is enough to kill him. But were the Universe to crush him, man would still be nobler than that which has slain him, because he knows that he dies, and that the Universe has the better of him. The Universe knows nothing of this.'<sup>1</sup> The intellect is, therefore, the cause of the greatness and dignity of man, and makes him *sui generis* among the things of his experience.

But the intellect itself contributes to the human dilemma, for it is a most defective instrument. This is a critical point in Pascal's thinking. His argument was aimed principally against philosophical scepticism, and yet he agreed to a large extent with the case which the sceptics had brought against the validity of reason. In particular he wanted to refute Montaigne, but much of what he says sounds like a paraphrase of passages from the *Essais*. He overtly rejected as unsound the method of Cartesian Rationalism, which Descartes himself had regarded as a cogent refutation of Montaigne's scepticism, and which the philosophers of Europe had mainly agreed to accept as such. Pascal sums up his opinion in the note, 'Descartes useless and uncertain.'<sup>2</sup> He thought the Rationalist method uncertain because vulnerable to the arguments of the sceptics, and useless because incapable of persuasion. He wanted to accept the sceptical premises as far as possible, and then show that the conclusion which the sceptics had drawn was indefensible; that is, he wanted to show that Montaigne's easy indifference to the truth or falsity of religion was, on his own terms, irrational.

Pascal was not a sceptic. That some truths are demonstrative was something he never denied, and, indeed, as a mathematician and scientist he had himself contributed a significant share to the *corpus* of human knowledge. He knew that the first principles of thought are indisputable, a fact which is supported by his famous remark about the heart having reasons of which the reason knows nothing; for by the term 'heart' he meant, not emotion or sentiment in the fashion of Rousseau, but the intellect itself in its intuitive, as contrasted with its discursive, operations. This is the reason for his assertion that principles are felt, and propositions (i.e. conclusions) deduced. The heart, in this sense, and the discursive reason are both valid instruments of knowledge, but the heart alone compels a love of the truth so that it is incontrovertible even by scepticism. This is why Pascal made the appeal to the heart the major element in his campaign of persuasion. His intention to persuade as well as to prove made him limit the area of certitude and appear more of a sceptic

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées*. Ed. A. Molinier. Tr. C. Kegan Paul. pp. 47-8.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 304.

than he was. His concern for men generally, rather than for the gifted few, increased this tendency. Thus in speaking of natural theology he says: 'The metaphysical proofs of God are so apart from man's reason, and so complicated that they are but little striking, and if they are of use to any, it is only during the moment that the demonstration is before them, but an hour afterwards they fear that they have been mistaken.'<sup>1</sup> This passage does not deny the validity of such proofs, but merely their usefulness for Pascal's purpose. His general position was that the area in which demonstration is certain and sufficient is very circumscribed, and that some other method than the merely intellectual is needed in dealing with human affairs.

The logical basis for Pascal's modified scepticism is the fact that the intellect itself falls into a mean between extremes, in this case the extremes of certain knowledge and absolute ignorance. Man is by his very nature irresistibly driven to seek the truth, and by the same nature prevented from finding it except to a limited degree. 'We have', Pascal says, 'an incapacity of proof which no dogmatism can overcome. We have an idea of truth which no scepticism can overcome.'<sup>2</sup> This accounts for relativism both in judgments and in conduct, for the fact that all men want to know what is true, and do what is right, and yet disagree so violently about truth and goodness. Here is the human dilemma. If man could know the universal truth which he desires, or cease to desire the truth which he cannot know, he could live contentedly. It is because he is an incredible compound of grandeur and debasement that his condition is so appalling, terrified as he is by the universe at large, and even more by the truth about his own nature.

The intellect, then, is in itself a very fallible instrument. But its predicament is accentuated by the fact that it exists, not *in abstracto*, but set, so to speak, in a psychological texture which includes the other powers of the soul; and these powers, or faculties, insofar as they are capable of influencing the intellect, are to that extent responsible for its judgments. The most obvious of such non-intellectual power, is sense perception, the illusions of which frequently confuse the mind and cause it to fall into error. This case is important for epistemology, but not for ethics or politics, and Pascal does not elaborate on it in his treatment of practical life. The other irrational forces are of the first importance in this sphere; they influence both ethics and politics, and in analogous ways. There are three such forces: the will, the imagination and custom or habit: that is, two psychological faculties, and a quality which affects human acts to the extent that they are free.

The will is the most important of the three, for it is the faculty which corresponds in the sphere of appetition to the intellect in the

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 109.

sphere of knowledge, and is therefore just as fundamental to human nature as the intellect itself. In Pascal's thought the will has a very special place as the root cause of man's dilemma. Pascal, if not actually a Jansenist, was strongly affected by the Jansenist view of human nature as totally corrupted by the Fall of Man. This is why the first part of the *Pensées*, which is called 'The Misery of Man without God', is sub-titled 'or That Nature is Naturally Corrupt'. According to the Jansenists this corruption of human nature is manifested mainly in the operations of the will, which, in the natural order and apart from grace, is incorrigibly attached to the personal interests of the individual. Egotism, therefore, is the ultimate motive of natural human acts. It also affects knowledge because the will has at least a partial control over the intellect through the direction of attention. Pascal describes the liaison in this way: 'The will is one of the chief organs of belief, not that it forms belief, but that things are true or false according to the side on which we view them. The will which chooses one side rather than the other turns away the mind from considering the qualities of all that it does not like to see, thus the mind, moving in accord with the will, stays to look at the side which it chooses, and so judges by what it sees.'<sup>1</sup> Since the will is naturally corrupt, its influence tends to vitiate intellectual judgments, just as it produces egotistical moral and political conduct.

The imagination is the faculty which creates opinion. Pascal uses this latter term in a wide sense to include both the judgments of the intellect as affected by the imagination, and emotional responses which the intellect opposes as irrational. An example of the second case is the following: 'Set the greatest philosopher in the world on a plank really wider than he needs, but hanging over a precipice, and though reason convince him of his security, imagination will prevail. Many will scarce bear the thought without a cold sweat.'<sup>2</sup> In affecting the intellect rather than opposing it, the imagination causes deference to appearances, to the façade which has nothing behind to support it. This occurs, for example, when weak men are obeyed for their strength, or the ignorant for their wisdom. 'Our magistrates', Pascal says, 'are well aware of this mystery. Their scarlet robes, the ermine in which they wrap themselves like furred cats, the halls in which they administer justice, the *fleurs-de-lis*, and all their august apparatus are most necessary; if the doctors had not their cassocks and their mules, if the lawyers had not their square caps, and their robes four times too wide, they would never have duped the world, which cannot resist so authoritative an appearance.'<sup>3</sup> So pervasive is the influence of the imagination that Pascal calls opinion, its offspring, 'the queen of the world'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

Finally there is custom, the habitual usage which makes anything acceptable simply because it is established and familiar. The idea of custom, or habit, goes even deeper in Pascal than in Aristotle. Pascal does not mention Aristotle by name in discussing the subject, but there is a direct reference to the Aristotelian principle of habit as second nature in the passage of the *Pensées* which reads: 'Fathers fear that the natural love of their children may be effaced. Now what sort of thing is that nature which is liable to be effaced? Custom is a second nature which destroys the former. But what is nature, for is not custom natural? I am greatly afraid that nature itself may be only our first custom, as custom is second nature.'<sup>1</sup> This apparently paradoxical reversal of the traditional doctrine follows from the fact that for Pascal nature and custom both spring from the single principle of imitation. That is, the order of inanimate things, and the volitional life of man, both develop by the repetition of the same phenomena. Thus he says of the natural world: 'Nature always begins the same things again, years, days and hours, and in like manner spaces and numbers follow each other, end without end. So is made a sort of infinity and eternity, not that any thing of these is infinite and eternal, but those finite entities are infinitely multiplied . . . Nature imitates herself.'<sup>2</sup> On the basis of this argument Pascal goes so far as to suggest that the laws of nature may be actually only its habits, and that this is why they show a certain degree of contingency. *A fortiori*, his description of human nature comes close, on this point, to psychological associationism, to habitual association of ideas as the basis of rational life. The word 'description' is operative here, for Pascal does not use habitual association as an explanatory principle, but merely notes it as an empirical fact. For an explanation of human nature he goes outside the natural order altogether. As in the case of scepticism he pushes the associationist principle as far as it will go and then absorbs it into his total picture of man.

Now the three irrational forces which influence the mind, all, on the natural level, lead men away from their true end, since the will is naturally self-centred, the imagination is the parent of false hope, and custom strengthens whatever is familiar without regard for good or evil. Pascal's picture of man is, therefore, that of a being who desires the truth, and falls into scepticism; who is oriented towards happiness, and is incapable of finding it. This is his intellectual and moral dilemma. He also wants justice, and here the dilemma becomes social. If justice implies communal behaviour according to the moral law, and if this law cannot be discovered, then justice is as unobtainable as goodness. Both fall into the category of opinion, and relativism in ethics is paralleled by relativism in politics.

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 85.

Pascal states the strictly moral problem in these words: 'Men of unruly lives assert that they alone follow nature, while those who are orderly stray from her paths; as passengers in a ship think that those move who stand upon the shore. Both sides say the same thing. The harbour decides the question for those who are in the vessel, but where can we find the harbour in morals?'<sup>1</sup> The answer he gives to this question is that the ethical point of rest is to be found in religion. For man as a natural being everything is in movement but as subject to divine grace, and endowed with the theological virtue of faith, he is lifted above the purely natural order of relative opinion to the universality of certain truth. Through the teaching of Scripture and the Church the individual can learn with certainty whether or not his personal conduct is essentially right.

Pascal's treatment of politics is analogous to his treatment of ethics insofar as the one is deducible from the other: religious truth is the ultimate sanction in both. On the natural level both face the same difficulties, and the problem of a natural law common to all states resembles the problem of a moral law common to all men. Pascal does not deny the existence of natural law, but only the capacity of the unaided reason to discover it. 'There are,' he says, 'no doubt natural laws, but fair reason once corrupted has corrupted all.'<sup>2</sup> Therefore the political problem concerns the weakness of the intellect and those same irrational forces which affect it in its general operations. The will, the imagination, and custom all manifest themselves in society as well as in individuals, and are at least partially responsible for laws and institutions as we find them. But politics is *sui generis* in the sense that some laws are not dictated by the moral law, but are selected from a group of several all of which are legitimate; so that a comprehensive political theory must find a place for purely positive law.

The way in which Pascal attacks the political problem is more closely connected with the historical *milieu* of his time than is the rest of his thought. Like Bossuet and other authoritarian political theorists he was strongly affected by the events surrounding the *Fronde*, the rebellion of nobles and parliamentarians against the rule of Cardinal Mazarin; and like them he came to regard civil war as the greatest of political calamities. His reaction to the *Fronde* was similar to Hobbes' reaction to the Cromwellian rebellion and Bodin's to the French wars of religion.

Peace, therefore, being the sovereign good in the state, how is it to be obtained and maintained, in a world of ignorance and relativism? Pascal puts the difficulty thus: 'On what shall man found the economy of the world which he would fain govern? If on the caprice of each man all is confusion. If on justice, man is ignorant

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées*, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 62.

of it.<sup>1</sup> Yet society does in fact carry on in an orderly way, and what permits it to do so is the fact that custom and imagination, the same forces which control so much of individual life, also influence that of society, only in this case they are supplemented by force, an element which has no bearing on human volition. For Pascal custom is essential to authority in the state as it exists naturally. Montaigne had already said much the same thing, but he thought that custom should be a guiding principle because it is essentially just. In Pascal's argument essential justice is unobtainable, it is not to be found in custom, which is merely what is established; but it is right to follow custom as the source of domestic peace. The people at large, on the other hand, should not be disabused of the notion that their customary laws are just, for then they would not obey them, and peace would be compromised. The whole Pascalian dialectic goes like this: 'Montaigne was wrong: custom should only be followed because it is custom, and not because it is reasonable or just; but most men follow it for the simple reason that they think it just. Otherwise they would not follow it though it were the custom, for our only wish is to be subjected to reason and justice . . . It is good to obey laws and customs because they are laws, but we ought to know that there is neither truth nor justice to introduce into them, that we know nothing about these, and can therefore only follow what is recognized, and thus we should never transgress them. But most men cannot receive this doctrine, and since they believe that truth can be found, and that it resides in law and custom, they believe these laws, and take their antiquity as a proof of their truth, and not merely of their authority apart from truth. Thus they obey the laws, but are liable to revolt when these are shown to be of no value; and this may be proved of all of them, looked at from a certain point of view.'<sup>2</sup> For Pascal custom is something which is unequivocal and established, and its acceptance is a guarantee against civil war.

But what is the basis of social custom? It is force or power. This is another term which Pascal uses in a wide sense; it means the natural cause of respect among men, so that it is really a substitute for true justice. It is of the first importance for society since it too is unequivocal and established, attributes which make it a firm basis for communal life. To have power is to be able to command, and this is what Pascal means when he says that the right of the sword is a true right. But men want to obey not merely the strong but the just, so it is necessary to unite power with justice. Here Pascal is using the term 'justice' to mean human, or prudential, justice rather than essential justice; it is in this sense that to obey the laws of the state can be called 'just' or 'right' since it is the guarantee of peace. Therefore he is not involved in a contradiction in saying that

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 64-5.

although essential justice cannot be discovered, the strong should be just. The argument is that force must be the starting point in social life both because its status is unequivocal, and because it can suppress justice when the two conflict. This is why Pascal says, 'Justice is subject to dispute, power is easily recognized and cannot be disputed. Thus we cannot give power to justice, because power has arraigned justice, saying that justice is unjust, and she herself truly just; so since we are unable to bring about that what is just should be strong, we have made the strong just.'<sup>1</sup> Thus a custom which is established and unique is to that extent strong and since the people in general regard it as just because it is old, therefore it represents a case in which justice has been added to power. But if it is suggested to the people that their custom is in fact not just, they will demand to see its credentials, and they will find the allegation to be true, for no human custom possesses essential justice; they will see that customs vary, so that there is an alternative to their own; this will undermine the strength of the custom, and rebellion will follow — rebellion in the name of justice, since the people are unable to understand that their demand for essential justice cannot be satisfied in the natural order. This is one more facet of the human dilemma, of the futility and frustration which comes of searching within nature for a good which lies beyond it. It explains Pascal's opposition to the *Fronde*, which would have substituted, not justice for injustice as it claimed, but merely one custom for another. Thus he speaks of 'the injustice of the *Fronde*, which raises its so-called justice against power'. And he adds: 'It is not the same in the Church, for there is true justice and no violence.'<sup>2</sup>

Power is, therefore, at the basis of social order. Once established, power is supplemented by custom, or the habit of obedience. The final ingredient of social harmony is the activity of the imagination. This faculty is to particular men what necessity is to men in general. Pascal's concept of necessity comes as close as his political thought ever does to the traditional theory of natural law, when he says that it is of necessity that the state should be divided between rulers and subjects, but that the imagination enforces any particular type of government. He describes the difference between necessity and imagination in this way: 'The cords attached by the respect of man for man are for the most part cords of necessity for there must be different degrees, all men wishing to rule, but not all being able to do so, though some are able.'

'Let us suppose then we see men beginning to form a society. They will no doubt fight till the stronger party gets the better of the weaker, and a dominant party is constituted. But as soon as this is once settled, the masters not wishing that the strife should continue,

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 68.

declare that the power in their hands shall be transmitted as they please, some placing it in the choice of the people, others in the succession of birth, etc.

'And here imagination begins to play her part. Till now power has constrained facts, now power is upheld by imagination in a certain party, in France that of the nobles, in Switzerland that of the burghesses etc.

'The cords therefore which bind the respect of men to any given man are the cords of imagination.'

The imagination which causes respect for judges and lawyers also causes respect for magistrates and kings. It is a most important agent in the state, for the awe of a king, or the veneration of a legal code, prevents examination of the logical basis of obedience to either, and therefore the exposure of its insufficiency. On Pascal's terms there is no meaning in the problem of a 'best' form of government, whether monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy; the only question is what a particular people think is best because custom and imagination tell them that it is. Nothing could be more absurd than to choose the eldest son of the king to rule after him, but where habit and public opinion support this principle, it should be followed simply as a matter of prudence.

The conclusion of Pascal's dialect is that the wise and the ignorant agree on obedience to civil laws, but for different reasons — the ignorant because they think them just, the wise because they know them to be useful. Speaking of the multitude Pascal says: 'It is, then, true to say that all men are under an illusion, for even though the opinions of the people be sound, they are not so as they hold them, for they think the truth where it is not. Truth is indeed in their opinions, but not at the point where they imagine it.'

'Thus it is true that we should honour men of birth, but not because good birth is in itself an advantage, etc.'

The half-educated, on the contrary, realize that the law is not just, but they do not understand why it should be obeyed anyway. They scoff at such things as hereditary aristocracy, thinking that it should be replaced by something more just, without grasping the fundamental point that justice does not enter into the problem. The stability of society is therefore well founded on the ignorance of the multitude or the knowledge of the wise, but imperilled by the semi-ignorance of the half-educated.

Pascal's description of man as a social being has now been considered, and it only remains to show the implications of it. The two elements of politics, the moral and the positive, must be kept separate here. It is sometimes said that Pascal's idea of the sanctity of custom meant that he wanted every society to be maintained in a

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 71.

state of Byzantine immobility, but this is clearly untrue of the moral side in politics, for this is subject to divine law just as ethics is, and against this custom has no validity. For Pascal the egotism of the will affects communal conduct as it does individual conduct, and the result is as immoral in the one case as in the other. Thus he calls the distinction between *meum* and *tuum* 'the beginning and the image of the usurpation of the whole earth'<sup>1</sup> — the usurpation not only of authority but also of possessions. A wrong will is the prime mover of natural society, and it is even capable of producing a caricature of true virtue, as alms-giving for the sake of vainglory. This being so, it is clear that to cleanse the will of its sensuality and egotism is to eradicate those customs which are opposed to virtue and truth. In speaking of the relativism of custom Pascal says, 'Theft, incest, infanticide, parricide, have all found a place among virtuous actions.'<sup>2</sup> But theft, incest, infanticide and parricide are all opposed to religious doctrine; they are, therefore, simply wrong, and should be opposed for theological reasons wherever they may be found. In the same way the so-called 'right of the sword' does not mean that the strong are justified in ruling wherever they can, and as they please. There is no place in Pascal's thought for Hobbes' theory of sovereignty, for against essential justice the right of the sword is no true right. Where the moral basis of politics is concerned, the relativism of nature is overcome by the higher sanction of supernatural uniformity.

Positive law is the legitimate sphere of relativism. The reason for this is that it lies outside of religious doctrine. Since religion does not apply here, some other basis must be found for maintaining an orderly social existence, and for Pascal this can only be the customs, or habitual usages, which fit the genius of any particular society. Since societies differ in their history and social psychology it is only logical that they should differ in their customary habits. The individual should obey the customs of his society because this enables him to live with his fellows according to an orderly pattern of communal conduct. Yet this does not mean that customs should never change. The only reason for obeying a given custom is that it is conducive to social peace, and when it ceases to fulfil this function, then obviously it should be abandoned. There is nothing sacrosanct about established law.

Since custom rules legitimately in positive law, it is right that it should be based on power, and strengthened by the imagination. All three are indispensable to society insofar as it has no other source from which to draw its principles of positive law, and without them nothing but the caprice of the individual would remain, and anarchy would take the place of the rule of law. Since custom is the point of

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées*, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 62.

rest which gives stability and order to social life, on Pascal's terms it is really analogous in nature to grace on the supernatural level. This means that he regarded politics, apart from ethics, as of no fundamental importance, but at best as a means of permitting the individual to pursue his true end. He accepted any given positive law, whether monarchy in France or democracy in Switzerland, as a mere show which functioned as a guardian of peace only because of the frivolity and futility of human nature. He thought that the wisdom of the individual lay in obeying the laws outwardly even while maintaining a strict indifference to them as meaningless for moral or religious life. The basic idea of Pascal's political thought comes out in one of the few passages in which he refers to the classical philosophers. 'We cannot', he says, 'think of Plato and Aristotle, save in professorial robes. They were honest men like others, laughing with their friends, and when they amused themselves with writing the *Laws* or the *Politics*, they did it as a pastime. That part of their life was the least philosophic and the least serious; the most philosophic was to live simply and quietly. If they wrote on politics it was as though they were laying down rules for a madhouse, and if they made as though they were speaking of a great matter, it was because they knew that the madmen to whom they spoke fancied themselves kings and emperors. They entered into their views in order to make their folly as little harmful as possible.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p. 79.

## SPENSER AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

JEAN M. EDWARDS

IF, by Spenser's school, be understood Raleigh, Sidney, and other of his contemporaries, the aims and achievements of Spenser and of his school do not always coincide. They were all humanists, typical products of the Renaissance, a strange mixture of worldliness and idealism: pre-occupied with wars and rumours of wars, hunters after preferment, patrons, positions of eminence in the State; yet with a passionate belief in the glory of art and learning, and in the future of English literature. They were far from despising conventions in art, but the greatest of them only utilized such conventions as props by which they might rise to original and sincere expression. They inherited the classical tradition, the lingering influence of the Middle Ages, and the new vitalizing impetus, like a wind of freedom, of Italian and French poetry. At last people's minds were being set free from the dreary dungeons of scholastic allegory. The new school of the *Pléiade* in France, dominated by Ronsard and Du Bellay, profoundly influenced Spenser in his Cambridge days. This new literary circle in France had broken free from the gamut of ballades, rondeaux and the like, which had been fresh enough in their first spring in Provence, but were now in their degeneracy, strangled in part by their excessive complication of rhyme and metre. With the *Pléiade*, new forms became fashionable. Pastoral, ode, elegy, satire, tragedy, and epic: those forms from the classics, on which the eighteenth century was later to lay such stress. The progress which Pope methodically made, from pastoral to elegy and mock-epic, Spenser and his contemporaries followed as their individual instincts dictated.

The school of the *Pléiade* was much concerned with moulding a more pliable language, in which they could express beauty, passion, and the subtlest shades of emotion. Greek, Latin, and obsolete and technical words in French itself, were all to contribute towards this new language. In England, poets had formed a similar purpose, but they were not agreed as to where these new words should come from. Sidney and others, among them Spenser's friend Gabriel Harvey, favoured the classics. The Elizabethans enjoyed playing with words; and soon Latin and Greek were grafted on to the vernacular, till the old Chaucerian language was barely recognizable. Spenser was contemptuous of this process; the mysterious F.K. called the result a 'gallimaufrey or hodge-podge'. Spenser sought a new diction from the resources of English itself. From dialect and

archaisms he built up a medium of expression which is individual in the extreme. In his hands, uncouth and harsh expressions become beautiful. He gives unity to the most discordant elements; he gives melody to that which in itself is unmelodious. This is due to the essentially poetic quality of his mind, the ἐνθουσιασμός and celestial inspiration', of which he speaks. In this he rises above all contemporaries, save only Shakespeare, and above all predecessors. The traditions of his school supply Spenser with his themes, with his forms, with his metre, and with his diction; but poetry exists apart from and above all these.

The great theme of the *Pléiade* was the transience of earthly joy. Perhaps it was their paganism which inspired this: but it is surely a theme which has touched all poets in their generation. It is absurd to say that, because this was a conventional idea of the school, that Spenser did not feel its power personally. The influence of other poets could only guide him as to which of his feelings he should express, and how he should express them: it could not form those feelings for him. The simplest test of the relative sincerity of Spenser is the relative melody of his poetry. Where he waxes most lyrical, there indeed it is impossible that the most ardent personal feeling should be absent. Some of his earlier poetry, the *Visions of Du Bellay*, and the *Ruines of Time*, is rendered obscure by the emblematical devices of the *Pléiade* school. These he later cast away: but the same theme of the vanity of worldly things keeps recurring. It is in the Spenser of *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*:

Even such is alle their vaunted vanitie,  
Nought else but smoke, that fumeth soone away.

It closes the *Faerie Queene*:

Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

The *Shepheards Calendar* ends with it, in a 'dying fall' that recalls the close of Shakespeare's sonnets, or of Shelley's lyrics:

Adieu delights, that lulléd me asleep.

And when Spenser praises Sydney when he is dead, and all others have deserted him, this theme is found again as he mourns for Astrophil:

Ah, how can so divine a thing be dead?

The pastoral forms of Theocritus, once they have left their native Etna, run the risk of losing their original sense of personal contact with the soil. The beauty which he found for himself in the forests and fields around him, other poets have been satisfied to find only at second-hand. Spenser's shepherds and shepherdesses live, not in

England, but in Arcady. In spite of the dialect, the informing spirit is classical, courtly, idealistic: as far as possible from the homely accents of Burns in the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. Spenser's idealism, indeed, agrees with Sidney's opinion in the *Defence of Poesie*: that poetry should present perfection rather than follow nature. This idealism caused Spenser to refine his own life and feelings into allegory. The *Shepheards Calendar* reveals him as a zealous Puritan, using allegory as a cloak for the social satire. The story of the Oak and the Briar, and Piers and Palinodie as representatives of the Puritan and High Church respectively, show the use of the originally innocent pastoral as a social weapon. *Mother Hubbard's Tale* is satire as cutting as Spenser could make it. His naturally gentle disposition did not incline him to this form of writing: and even in this instance it is not used out of spleen against particular persons, as Pope used it, but out of zeal for a general cause. The first book of the *Faerie Queene* makes it clear where Spenser's sympathies in religion lay. The Knight of Holiness is tempted by pride and outward shows. But the philosophy behind this poem is in debt to Plato. This is clear in the 'Mutabilitie' Book at the end. 'Mutabilitie' is the daughter of Earth and Chaos, and she seeks to snatch the sceptre from eternal Jove. To support her claim to empire, she appeals to the God of Nature; or perhaps to the Goddess; for she is so heavily veiled that none can tell her sex. Some said that the reason for this veil was that her countenance was too terrible to be seen, being like a Lion's; but others said that it was too beautiful,

Ne could be seen, but like an image in a glass.

This is the Platonic theory, that the things of earth are but shadows of reality, of the eternal prototypes which are too glorious for men's eyes. As Miss Spens has shown, the appeal of 'Mutabilitie' to Nature is a cynical claim that, as by nature everything is transient, so Jove the eternal does not really rule the universe, but is an usurper. The *Pléiade* theme of the transience of earthly things is here considered seriously; is it, ultimately, the truth? And the fact that Spenser goes to the trouble of examining this theme on the pulses of reality shows, as perhaps nothing else can, that he wrote his poetry from the heart and not merely in obedience to a literary fashion. There is real thought and desperate earnestness behind the seemingly-stiff allegory and conventional verses. 'Mutabilitie' says, and with reason that even on earth,

That only seems unmov'd and permanent;

men die, and others are born different; their fortunes change; the thoughts of their minds are as fluid as water, which in its own moving shows 'Mutabilitie' at work; both fish and fowl restlessly go from

place to place; winds and weathers are not still; and fire of its own nature cannot live, for it consumes itself. Even the elements are not content to remain as they are, but change, and mingle, and die, and have great conflicts one with another. Every moment the seasons are going by, and the months and hours, day and night, death and darkness, and life with its golden wings. There is certainly a case for 'Mutabilitie'.

But Spenser goes to Plato for an answer. He finds the transience of things too sad to bear. It is true, he makes Jove reply, that Time disburdens all things of their being: but Time itself is only an offspring of eternity. It is an argument that still occupies us: it occupies T. S. Eliot, for instance, in his 'Quartets'. J. W. Dunne, in the twentieth century, comes roughly to Spenser's conclusion, after long and independent thought. Others question Plato, and indeed affirm that he began that dualism of thought that may be considered the cause of most of our troubles. What evidence is there for the abstract and transcendent world that he postulates? Why should our life be only a shadow of reality, seen on the wall of a cave? It is the only reality we can know. Is it wise or even sane to distrust our senses, in favour of a Reality which remains only a hypothesis? A distrust of the senses means ultimately a negation of life and incarnation. And dualism forbids that unity of impression which is in poetry, that perception of the fusion of time and space with that extra dimension of value which runs ever cross-wise athwart the world; without which there could not be any existence. The permission of dualism means slavery to the ever-turning wheel of reaction, the continual unprogressive alternation of periods of analysis and synthesis. The nineteenth-century antagonism between science and religion was a typical symptom of the evils of this dualism. We cannot use the intellect for construction; 'we murder to dissect'. We are like small boys with bricks, continually building up, only to knock down again immediately. Perhaps this is our eternal destiny; the building-up process, as Vaihinger would say, is only an illusion which provides us with tools for thought. Santayana says human ideas are rationalized symbols; and a symbol is not ultimate truth, it is only a lever which raises the mind to understanding. Ellis believes that the imagination's building and the intellect's destroying of the philosophies, cosmologies, and political Utopias of the world serve the same ultimate purpose.

But whether this is so or not, the mutability of life is certainly no deception, no mere shadow of eternity; according to Henri Bergson, it is the very stuff of creation, a thing that demands acceptance in and for itself. It might be argued that Plato, disappointed with life, consoled himself with an imaginary Reality. What ingratitude for the great bliss of being born, what cowardice and self-deception!

'Mutabilitie' is necessary to clear away the lumber of dead ideals. If everyone led a life of pure simplicity, this dead lumber would decompose of its own accord. But this is almost impossible; and criticism is necessary to distinguish what is living from what is dead. And the great purpose of that is to clear the way for 'Mutabilitie', to enable her to pursue her great course untrammelled by the rubbish of the past. Reality is fluid, not fixed; reality is what we see, what we hear, what we taste, and what we touch.

But T. S. Eliot, J. W. Dunne, Einstein, point to an extra dimension. Perhaps, in a sense, everything that happens in time exists perpetually, in a static space-time continuum. This is not irreconcilable with Bergson's ideal of a fluid Reality. For the past is always with us, in the sense that it conditions the future in the way emphasized by Whitehead, and by the prophets of determinism. The other part of Reality that is eternal is the extra dimension of value perceived by the poet. It does not alter the pattern of events; it only floods them through with a new light. The moment of its doing so is incarnation. In this sense, eternity and time exist together and are reconciled; but time is not any the less real for that, as Plato would have affirmed it to be. Rather it takes on an extra and divine significance. Ariel cannot exist without Caliban, and to deny Caliban is to betray Truth. Spenser was led to do this on account of his Puritanism. His dualism is mirrored in his style, where the form is often so set apart from the spirit that critics have questioned his sincerity.

'Mutabilitie' indeed, puts up this defence. Jove wa's born on earth, she says; eternity is only a mortal idea, invented by men for their own comfort, so how can we believe in it? There is nothing to which we can point, and say: 'There is something that never changes!' Even the planets move out of their orbits, the moon has her phases, the sun its eclipses; even the stars are never still. But Nature puts up a defence that no modern man, acquainted with evolution, could better. Things change, she says; but they only change in order to mature, to grow greater, to work their own perfection. In the end, they come full circle on themselves, back to their primal simplicity and innocence, but with some indefinable addition. Time has given them greatness. Nature predicts a

... time when no more *Change* shall be,  
But steadfast rest of all things firmly stayd  
Upon the pillows of Eternity.

And so ends the *Faerie Queene*, with a reconciliation of the humanist ideal of infinite perfectibility with Spenser's religion, which looked upon death as a union with eternity: as in *Hamlet*,

Passing through nature to eternity.

The 'Mutabilitie' Book also reconciles the Pléiade idea of the transience of earthly things with the Platonic idea of a changeless, unknowable Reality. Again, it reconciles the notion of the ancients, that time moves in cycles, to return everlastinglly upon itself, with the new Renaissance ideal of progress, in which time moves in a straight line of infinite betterment. Perhaps the answer to these contradictions lies in the perversity of human nature, which appears to need both the joyful release of feeling itself in 'a world of infinite space', and also the reassuring strength of the Rock of Ages to grab at in moments of insecurity. We are like children, who dislike the leading-reins but like the nurse beside us 'just in case'. We believe only what we want to believe; nothing more, nothing less.

Spenser's 'Knights of the Faerie Queene' are a little unreal nowadays, because with the advent of psychology people have ceased to believe that virtues and vices can be parcelled out tidily into pigeon-holes. That is a medieval conception; More's *Utopia* introduces the idea of a game like draughts, with some counters representing virtues, and others representing vices. By this means, he sanguinely hopes the Utopians will be taught morality, and be enabled to guide their ways safely through the pathless perplexities of their own souls. However, the 'Knights of the Faerie Queene' are not quite abstractions and nothing else: they possess a limited humanity. It is no more limited than the humanity of a Jonsonian 'humour' or of an eighteenth-century type, and quite legitimate in art. An artistic creation must always be limited, selective; it must give the impression of having a life of its own, but an exact copy of life is always intolerably dull. It would not, in fact, be an exact copy of life as it appears to the individual; because the individual consciousness is selecting, all the time, those things which feed it and give it life, and throwing away or ignoring those things which are hostile to its nature. An exact copy of life, so-called, for that reason impels no recognition in us. It does not even possess the vitality of the true grotesque. So we throw it aside in boredom and disgust.

The *Faerie Queene* is a great romance. Epic structure is absent; but Chivalry with all its equipage here finds its greatest expression since Malory. The knight errant of medieval romance had caught Spenser's imagination, impressionable as that was to beauty: the physical beauty of pageantry and the spiritual beauty of high endeavour. The school to which Spenser belonged did not contribute to this; the Pléiade group favoured the true epic, and had cast overboard medieval forms. Spenser saved what was best from the wreck of medievalism. His poem suffers for lack of structure, but possesses much that might have been lost if he had written strictly according to rule. His genius, a mixture of the lyrical and the contemplative, was not suited to the rigid bands of strict epic. His

instinct led him away from Virgil and Homer, to seek inspiration with Tasso and chivalry. Combined with this is the Renaissance zest, the feeling that nothing is impossible to man:

And later times things more unknown shall show,

he says in the second book, arguing that there is no proof against the existence of Faery land. By 'Faerie lond' he means England: he also means the individual soul. He is the map-maker of the human mind. He is describing the workings of the soul, as they appear to him. The allegory is carried on on several planes at once: political, spiritual, apparent. The universal and the particular may be united in a single symbol. Spenser's school produced nothing like it. They were limited to the usual forms out of Italy and France. He, with the liberty of genius, united the new forms with the medieval symbolism, and produced something intensely individual.

Always behind the conventional phrases of the minor poems lingers the ghost of intense feeling. Everywhere one comes on evidence of Spenser's love of natural beauty:

One day, (quoth he) I sat, (as was my trade)  
Under the foot of Mole, that mountain hore,  
Keeping my sheep amongst the cooly shade,  
Of the green alders by the Mullaes shore:  
There a straunge shepheard chaunst to find me out . . .

Personal events, such as this meeting with Raleigh, are clothed in the pastoral conventions of Theocritus, that one might have thought outworn. But the piping of Colin to the sheep below Mole is poetically true, symbolically exact; and the shore is a real shore, the alders real alders, the Mulla a real river. Spenser did not describe scenery he did not know. He had been to Ireland and seen the River Mulla, and his love of it had been transformed into lyrical poetry. He does not deal drearily from a shabby pack of cards.

A study of Spenser's school is helpful, for it explains why he used particular forms and themes. It explains his hopes for the language and literature of England. It explains the ground over which he laboured, the star which led him, and the way he trod. But, given all these, the results are beyond expectation. They can be attributed only to Spenser's own personality. He must be appreciated for himself alone. It is fitting that his immortality should assume Colin's emblem: *La mort ny mord*.

## BOOK REVIEWS

F. H. MARSHALL: *Citizenship and Social Class*. Cambridge University Press, 10s. 6d. net.

By far the most important (and the longest) of the four pieces which compose this book is that which gives it its title. *Citizenship and Social Class* is an elusive piece of writing, very compact and concise, often suggesting more than it says, and giving off an intellectual dazzle which the reader has to accustom himself to. As a lecture (a shortened form of it was given as the Alfred Marshall Lecture in Cambridge in 1949) it must have been difficult; but nobody who has given any thought to the subject will come away from reading it without the impression that here is something unusually profound and philosophical. And besides its masterly treatment of its own particular theme, it will do more than the most brilliant external account of the nature of sociology to convert those who are doubtful about the whole enterprise which goes under that name. Professor Marshall is not a voluminous writer, but when he gives us something of this quality we can resign ourselves to his long periods of silence.

His theme is the growth, in English society, of what he calls the 'status of citizenship' and its repercussions on the structure of the society and upon what he calls 'social class' and 'equality'. He begins with a brilliant piece of *histoire raisonnée* in which he traces the uneven development of the three kinds of 'rights' which compose the status of citizenship: civil, political and social rights. Civil rights are those which put no legal obstacle in the way of a man behaving in a certain manner: he has the right to speak if he has anything to say, the right to enjoy property if he has come by it legally. Political rights give a man a voice in government and a hand in the process by which civil rights are created and maintained. Social rights are those positive opportunities and expectations a man is given, regardless of his means and his social class, to exercise his civil rights and in general enjoy a certain way of living — the right to education, to medical care, etc. Generally speaking, it is contended, these three sorts of rights were interwoven in medieval civilization, but in the seventeenth century they parted company — developed at different speeds and, in some respects, in different directions; by 1832 an Englishman's civil rights were as complete as they are now, by 1918 his political rights were maturely established, but his social rights were slower in growth and their great period is the twentieth century. We are now in a situation in which the three have more nearly come together again and compose a coherent whole than at any period since the sixteenth century. This historical survey is preliminary to a discussion of the strains and tensions which compose and make stable contemporary English society. Elements of instability and incoherence are recognized, but on the whole we are given a picture of strength, though not of logical consistency.

I have called Professor Marshall's treatment an *histoire raisonnée* because, in spite of the great subtlety with which he traces the fortunes of these three different kinds of rights and their impact on social class, the result is something very much less than a concrete picture. In fact the three elements of citizenship never so completely parted company; and in fact they had far greater influence upon one another than Professor Marshall allows. It is too narrow a view to suggest that for a long period the Poor Law alone represented an Englishman's social rights. Social rights are the 'superstructure of legitimate expectations' which a man may have as a citizen, but expectations do not have to wait to be 'legitimized' until they are 'officially recognized'. 'Legitimization' also has its history and did not spring up suddenly and fully-armed: social rights are not the creatures of the

modern state. The passage from legitimate expectation to personal right may involve a legal jump, but socially it is a slowly mediated and uninterrupted process. The church (never mentioned in these pages), which is neither a functional association nor a local community, over a long period gave men legitimate expectations. Further, Professor Marshall recognizes that when a form of activity (such as education) became a social right, the right was a claim on a minimum standard, but this characteristic should be recognized as universal: 'political journalism for the intelligentsia' may have been 'followed by newspapers for all who could read', but the quality was adapted to the market. It is not the 'components of a civilized and cultured life, formerly the monopoly of the few', which 'were brought progressively in reach of the many', how could it be? What the many enjoy is some shadowy counterpart of these components. Inequality is not so easily removed. And there are other, smaller but not unimportant, points where compression has led to historical inadequacy. The appearance of free compulsory education in the nineteenth century is spoken of as a signal departure from *laissez-faire* requiring some subtlety of view to make it seem coherent with its time and place; but this hypostatization of *laissez-faire* as the pre-eminent character of the age is surely a mistake — the same sort of mistake as that which ascribes intellectual self-confidence to the Victorian and then regards the morass of doubt and indecision which constituted the minds of so many Victorians as eccentric to the period. And does not the view that 'citizenship is based upon a set of ideals, beliefs and values' put the history the wrong way round; these ideals and values are the product of the enjoyment of citizenship, which in the first place is a manner of being active.

These are small points — and Professor Marshall's unwary use of the phrase, on two or three occasions, 'absolute natural rights' might be added to them — and they do not seriously detract from what is a modest and brilliant piece of analysis. Of course there are questions we should like to ask — why is the elimination of inherited privilege on all occasions thought to be an unquestionable advantage? How, after all that has been written, can 'democracy' and 'equality' be so naively equated? Why is the counterpart of government intervention in industrial disputes — trade union intervention in the work of government — thought to be an asset and not a questionably high price to pay? Why does Professor Marshall speak of the 'capitalist class system' when (it would appear) what he means by 'class' has little to do with the organization of industry? Why, if the 'development of democratic citizenship' is so empirical, so paradoxical a phenomenon, should we have such confidence in it as a foundation for a 'planned' society? Is there any basis for the 'personal obligation to work' which is seen to be 'attached to the status of citizenship', other than the fact that we have contracted a number of very expensive social rights? And why is Professor Marshall (who seems to be without any of the traditional beliefs which have given men confidence in the way they are going) so optimistic? But there is so much subtlety and reflectiveness and so little partisanship in Professor Marshall's attitude and view of the contemporary social situation that, even if his conclusions are sometimes obscure, nobody can read him without enlightenment and the pleasure that comes from a sincere and cogent argument.

MICHAEL OAKESHOTT

GORDON WRIGHT: *The Reshaping of French Democracy*. Methuen, 15s.

Constitution-making may be great fun for those who take part in the game, but those who discuss it in the text books of political science too often make it appear a singularly dreary and arid occupation. Yet the birth of a régime is a fascinating subject of study when the constitutional formulae are properly related to the strains and stresses of the society in which they are expressed. The

birth of the Fourth French Republic was a singularly difficult operation, so difficult that it looked at one time as though the child might be stillborn, and so complex that when it survived it seemed to some to resemble an anaemic monstrosity. This difficulty and complexity were enough to scare or bore most people except the professional observers of the contemporary scene. But now those of us who were disinclined to be bothered with what could be unjustly dismissed as the antics of the politicians of a country in decline should revise their hasty judgments and take Mr Gordon Wright, Professor of history at Oregon, as their guide. We knew that the old struggle between old and new went on and that it seemed as true as ever that in France *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*: but in a fluent if somewhat journalistic style he has contrived to make enthralling what too easily seemed tedious, and he picks his way with such sure and light tread through the quaking bogs and past the stagnant pools of the post-war years that the reader has confidence in his lucid analyses. *The Reshaping of French Democracy* is the work of a man who can write with the detachment, the happily humorous detachment, of a foreigner, but who at the same time by dint of having served for two years at the U.S. Embassy in Paris has been able to observe at their centre a good part of the events which he describes and who has either met or seen many of the chief actors.

The main body of the book is of course concerned with the post-liberation period, but there is a brief and effective obituary of the Third Republic at the beginning (Mr Wright returns a verdict of suicide), followed by a chapter on The Republic Underground and Overseas which deals with Vichy, the Maquis and the Free French. These pages are essential to set the post-war problems in their true perspective. Nevertheless some aspects of these problems remain obscure. Mr Wright does not explain the enigmas of General de Gaulle's conduct and character and the picture of the General's entourage remains sketchy. That of the Communists is also not as full as it might usefully have been. Why, for instance, were their successes in rural areas in the elections of 1945 so 'startling' and how far have they maintained them? How far, too, was their conduct and popular reaction to it governed by considerations of foreign policy? Mr Wright properly emphasizes the new importance of the French Imperial problem, but he pays perhaps insufficient attention to the impact of world affairs generally upon the political whole of Frenchmen. The widespread conviction or acceptance of the fact that France was now only a second or third rate power was a new phenomenon which may not have had direct constitutional effects, but it may well have influenced the way in which Frenchmen reacted to the conduct of their politicians. Why, too, did so few new leaders emerge of any outstanding capacity? These are a few of the questions which suggest themselves and which are doubtless far easier to ask than to answer. But the asking of them does not detract from the many merits of this 'venture on to the thin ice of contemporary history'.

Mr Wright's book contains the text of the constitution of the Fourth Republic in English translation and also a convenient plan of its organs, some of which seem already to be virtually atrophied. In discussing the first Constituent Assembly he gives a useful analysis of its composition: it is to be hoped that when he comes to revise his book for a new edition he will do the same for the National Assembly. And when that edition comes it will be interesting to see whether he confirms the impression of a very casual observer that as time passes the Fourth Republic grows ever more like the Third; the tendency now being to accept the Upper Chamber more readily and to seek some more traditional form of electoral machinery.

J. P. T. BURY

E. T. DAVIES: *Episcopacy and the Royal Supremacy in the Church of England in the XVI Century*. *Basil Blackwell*, 10s. 6d.

In the three essays composing this book, Mr Davies has used the Anglican formularies and the writings of Anglican divines to investigate the relations between Church and State in the sixteenth century. It is refreshing to find that century for once tackled from the point of view with which it would itself have had most sympathy: this is primarily an account of the interplay of theology and political theory. Taking the formularies from the Ten Articles of 1536 to the Thirty-Nine of 1571, and the writings of Tyndale, Gardiner, Cranmer, Jewel, Whitgift, Bancroft, Bilson and Hooker, Mr Davies demonstrates in the first essay that Anglican doctrine on the nature of episcopacy carried on the medieval doctrine of the ministry and, after Cranmer had definitely come down on the side of divine origin, developed again in that direction under the stress of the controversy with presbyterianism, Calvinist influence having first induced Anglican writers to use more practical and historical arguments. The third essay shows that the Church from the first believed in obedience to the lay power as represented by the king, and that its views, while far from Erastian, were well in line with the seventeenth-century Anglicanism which culminated in non-resistance and passive obedience. Mr Davies's method is less successful in the middle essay which deals with the effect of the supremacy on the episcopate; this is a practical problem which contemporary doctrine or even contemporary expressions of opinion can do little to solve. What is required here is a study of the actual fate, powers, and activities of individual bishops, a study for which Mr Davies has hardly room; as it is, he brings out the dangers to the episcopate rather too starkly, though he admits that without the royal supremacy the bishops themselves might well have gone by the board. He seems to misunderstand the position of Thomas Cromwell as Henry VIII's vicegerent in spirituals, and with it the fact — which he nevertheless mentions — that the crown never claimed sacerdotal powers; this was not chance but firm intention from the start. But supremacy did mean to all the Tudors the right to define doctrine, though they practised it in varying degree. If a major criticism may be made of this most valuable and generally very penetrating study, it is that Mr Davies has allowed himself to be restrained too much by his self-chosen limits; we would welcome a little more on the ecclesiastical background to these theoretical discussions, and a forward-looking summary would help to place the theology and political thought of the sixteenth-century Church in its proper historical perspective. But our main feeling must be one of gratitude for a courageous attempt to grapple with some of the most repulsive historical material in existence in order to illuminate a problem which itself is still very much alive.

G. R. ELTON

H. ORMSBY: *France. A Regional and Economic Geography*. Second Edition. *Methuen*, 25s.

Dr Ormsby makes clear in her preface that a complete re-writing of her *France* is not, today, within her physical capacity and she also points out that the physical features of France and their correlation with the landscape, which form one of the main themes of her book, have not changed perceptibly in the past score of years. The second edition is therefore in part a new edition and in part a reprinting. It retains the general format of the first edition and consists of three parts, a brief introduction dealing mainly with climate, a long section consisting of a series of regional studies, and some 120 pages devoted to Economic Geography under the headings of 'agriculture', 'industry' and 'communications'. It is the third section which has been revised, with the help of Mr F. J. Monkhouse. The first two sections remain, with minor modifications, as in the first edition.

Comment was made on the first edition as to whether the title 'regional' was justified as the book is rather an economic geography by regions. It was originally planned, however, to meet the need for an economic geography of France which had not been forthcoming despite the voluminous geographical literature on France. It still performs that function, but as an economic geography it is unfortunate that further revision was not possible. In the main part of the book, populations of towns and some output figures have been revised but, for example, 1926 returns of the 'gainfully employed population' of the department of Nord are retained and some figures of output and employment in the Sarre collieries have not been brought up to date. In the third part of the book new material has been added but statistical data is usually pre-war as Dr Ormsby decided that it is yet too early to try to assess the effects of the Second World War. Lack of post-war data is, however, partly offset by the addition of a brief but very useful appendix entitled 'A Summary of Economic Conditions 1939-47' and contributed by Mr Monkhouse.

Most of the numerous maps are good. In the first two parts they are those of the first edition, but in the third part the maps showing distributions of crops and livestock have been redrawn from the 1937 returns. A valuable feature of the first edition was the bibliographies given for each chapter. These have been retained without change.

The most serious criticism of the book is that little consideration is given to demographic trends and problems. Present French Government policy on the immigration of foreign workers and on measures to increase the birth rate suggests that demographic trends are today even more significant to France than when the first edition of Dr Ormsby's work was published. The short appendix on the Population of France during the last half-century still refers readers to a 1929 report on 'The Occupational Distribution and Status of Foreign Workers'.

The book is not easy to read since it includes much detailed information but it is of great value for reference to particular areas, and it carries the clear imprint of personal knowledge and careful compilation. Despite criticisms, Dr Ormsby's book remains an authoritative statement. The new edition will be welcomed by geographers and should be recommended to all who study France or the French people.

A. A. L. CAESAR

WINSTON H. F. BARNES: *The Philosophical Predicament*. A. & C. Black, 10s. 6d. net.

This book gives an account of the chief movements in British philosophy during the present century; that is to say, the Philosophical Defence of Common-sense, Philosophical Analysis, and the various doctrines popularly known as Logical Positivism. These all began and flourished at Cambridge and have, in their turn, migrated to Oxford where they have inevitably come into the lime-light and enlisted new talent. Professor Barnes is not the first to attempt an appraisal of this kind: readers of the weeklies will already have come across a number of hostile accounts, especially of Logical Positivism, a favourite butt of Dr Joad's. At a more advanced (though scarcely more discerning) level, we have Mr Farrel's attack on Professor Wittgenstein and Mr Wisdom in *Mind* (1946) and Father Coplestone's recent article in *The Dublin Review* (No. 448). The ordinary reader, while gathering that recent philosophy has been a Bad Thing, may be inclined to make some allowance for academic rivalries and jealousies. If he is in this salutary frame of mind he would do well to read an article by Mrs Braithwaite, published in *Theology* (SPCK) for February 1951, in which a better informed and more sympathetic account is given.

Professor Barnes has written for the general reader, not for the professional

philosopher: he gives an account of the views of Professor G. E. Moore, Lord Russell, Professor Broad, Professor Wittgenstein, Mr Wisdom and Professor Ayer. All except the last are Cambridge philosophers: and all are condemned except Broad who (to adopt one of his own phrases) is 'praised with faint damns'. Mr Barnes condemns the earlier Cambridge philosophers because they have devoted themselves to critical philosophy and (either directly or by implication) have denied the possibility or the utility of philosophy as traditionally understood; they have deserted the grand themes (God, Freedom, Immortality) to potter about amongst inkstands and siblings. He condemns others because they have tried to make critical philosophy into a mere critique of language, and have dismissed most of the great metaphysical theories as tautology or falsehood or nonsense. Mr Barnes asks the general reader to consider the predicament of these negative philosophers: Is not their very denial of philosophy itself a philosophy of a kind? And to consider also the predicament of us all who find philosophy attacked as an irrational or futile pursuit.

In later chapters, Mr Barnes discusses the relation of philosophy to common sense and to ordinary language (II); Philosophical Analysis (III-V); and Logical Positivism (VI, VII). Having disposed of these, he constructs a basis for critical philosophy (VIII) and shows that those who attempt critical philosophy are in effect committed to speculative philosophy also (IX).

Mr Barnes represents Moore as insisting that what Moore believes he knows must be common sense — 'a habit we all have, but one not regarded as specially philosophical'. Moore recognized that in the case of most of our firmest beliefs, no *general* proof can be given, whether deductive or inductive. So that, when it is a question of proving that external objects exist, Moore holds up his two hands, saying 'Here is one hand and here is another'. Does this provide any kind of reason for believing in external objects? Mr Barnes thinks not: Mr Wisdom, however, has devoted most of his recent Presidential Address to the question 'whether appearances are reasons or not'. He evidently thinks that Moore *wasn't* doing something either trivial or unphilosophical. It is another question (also raised by Mr Barnes) whether what Moore asserted was really inconsistent with what his Idealistic opponents maintained. To this, and to several other searching questions raised in this book, it would be difficult to find a clear answer.

In discussing Analysis, Mr Barnes distinguishes between purely logical analysis (which was Moore's main task) and that directed reductionist analysis which is found in the writings of Russell, the Vienna Circle and others. He holds (and I think rightly) that this second kind of analysis was in fact a kind of interpretation — the expression and the application of metaphysical beliefs. Mr Barnes points to Logical Atomism, Physicalism, Phenomenalism and the Emotive theory of ethical statements, as examples of metaphysical philosophy disguising itself as linguistic analysis. What the 'analysis' tells us is not what we meant by our statement, but 'what we must *really* mean' if certain views about the world are true. Where I (once again) disagree with the author, is in his dismissal of purely logical analysis as of no philosophical importance. (It is, of course not the only useful method of doing philosophy.) And although we may admire the dash and vigour with which Mr Barnes makes his attacks, few will agree that Moore has wasted his powers on trivial questions. Moore is great not only for what he is, but also for what he has written.

The popular misnomer 'Logical Positivism' would seem to cover some three or four distinguishable but connected philosophies: (i) Wittgenstein and his friends and disciples, (ii) The Vienna Circle of the 1930s and the school of metalogicians which they have since established in America; (iii) Professor A. J. Ayer and (iv) Professor Ryle and others at Oxford. I should have preferred to confine the label 'Logical Positivism' to the second and third of these groups: in

that case Ayer's brilliant and widely read book, *Language, Truth & Logic*, is indeed a fair representative of Logical Positivism. This would allow us to distinguish very much more sharply than Mr Barnes does, between Wittgenstein (on the one hand) and Ayer and the Vienna Circle; and to identify more closely than he does, the later teaching of Wittgenstein with the writings of Mr John Wisdom. Of the fourth group Mr Barnes says nothing at all: no doubt Ryle's *Concept of Mind* arrived too late for examination. (It is, of course, a thankless and highly contentious job to try to sort out philosophers who are still actively pursuing their debates.)

What unites the groups is their original connection with Wittgenstein. His *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was published in German in 1921, and attracted the early attention of Moritz Schlick in Vienna; through Schlick it influenced the Vienna Circle — in particular the early work of Carnap, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* (1928). But this school was committed (in a way quite foreign to Wittgenstein's teachings) to a materialistic metaphysic and to a most thorough-going 'scientific attitude'. ('Only the scientific mind has the right to criticize the validity of knowledge,' wrote Schlick.) To them must be ascribed the verification principle to the effect that a proposition has no meaning unless it can be 'verified' by observation. It was from their voluminous writings in *Erkenntnis* that Ayer derived many of the characteristic themes of *Language, Truth & Logic*: but there was a new leaven in this lump — the great works of Berkeley and Hume. For that, and for Ayer's native talent as a writer and a debater, the English reader has cause for gratitude. It is also true that Ayer was influenced by the *Tractatus*

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H U T C H I N S O N

which was published in England in 1922, and by Wittgenstein's teaching at Cambridge in the 1930s. Ludwig Wittgenstein died at Cambridge on Sunday, April 29th: and the writings in which he expressed the philosophy of his mature years will now have to pass through other hands. But although nothing of this later work has yet been published, the influence of Wittgenstein as a teacher has already been immense. No doubt, on some minds this influence has been bad: for certainly there is a persistent danger that his thought will be misunderstood as implying that philosophical problems aren't real problems; or that there isn't anything important to be learned from doing philosophy. But to those who knew Dr Wittgenstein and his manner of life, these misinterpretations will seem fantastic.

In his later teaching much, but by no means all, of the *Tractatus* has been repudiated.

'All philosophy is critique of language (but not at all in Mauthner's sense).' No doubt these enigmatical words remain true; but what kind of critique of language did Wittgenstein practise? Not Mauthner's, not Moore's. He held that the task of the philosopher is to elucidate the perennial metaphysical questions (Mind — Body, Finite and Infinite, Subject — Object, Other Minds, Reasons and Causes, Knowledge and Belief, Appearance and Reality) by an exploration of the logical framework of a given language, and of any possible kind of language. That is, to draw attention to logical features which a given language has and shows, but which cannot be expressed in ordinary contingent statements of that language.

Wittgenstein's teaching accorded to the natural language, and to symbolism generally, an absolutely fundamental importance in the whole of our civilization and culture. To describe philosophy as 'the critique of language' is, clearly enough on this view not to belittle philosophy. But Mr Barnes is absolutely correct in saying that along these lines we don't reach *a system of necessary truths* about the universe. Nevertheless language is used to express 'the meaning of life', 'the purpose behind the universe'; to assign a status to man, to show God in the world. And it is not to be overlooked that religious language can be (and is being) studied in a spirit very far removed from 'positivism'.

Where was Mr Barnes to look for an authoritative account of this later Wittgenstein philosophy? A number of writers in learned journals have made their attempts. In particular, there are the many long, difficult and illuminating meditations committed to paper by Mr John Wisdom. But even the best of them is apt to seem like an echo of a private discussion. Certainly no verdict can be given until Wittgenstein's own later writings are published. Mr Barnes has therefore concentrated his attention upon Ayer and the Vienna Circle. When he comes to formulate (for demolition) four basic doctrines of logical positivism, they turn out to be (1) Behaviourism (*Physikalismus*), (2) Phenomenalism, (3) Logicism 'which holds that deduction and induction are the only rational procedures in any inquiry' and (4) Positivism — the doctrine that necessary principles are all tautologies and that all other statements have meaning only if they satisfy the criterion of verifiability. His criticisms of these doctrines are in many cases thoroughly sound and illuminating: but on the whole it is true to say that the doctrines chosen represent the views of the Vienna School fifteen years ago, rather than the present views of any active contemporary.

Mr Barnes presents his case in a clear and orderly way, and he is (besides) a lively and witty controversialist. His book is embellished with a wealth of quotations in prose and verse and it will be widely read and enjoyed; indeed far more widely read than the extremely difficult, *text* and searching works which are here expounded and exposed.

K. W. BRITTON

## BOOK REVIEWS

### J. M. HART: The British Police.

*George Allen & Unwin*, 12s. 6d.

Our police system has its full share of the complex and the paradoxical. Though esteemed as a local government service, a quarter of its forces are directly under the Home Secretary. While the borough police authority is a committee of an elected council, the county authority consists partly of magistrates appointed by the central government and partly of councillors locally elected. The former deals with all appointments to the force and its discipline; the latter merely deals with the Chief Constable. The principle of the *ad hoc* authority for local services has been sustained and strengthened in relation to the police while being supplanted elsewhere by that of the compendious authority. Yet these *ad hoc* committees have the power of precepting for their revenue upon locally elected bodies. The Metropolitan Police, though controlled by a Minister, has about half its cost borne by local ratepayers who have no corresponding voice in its control. Enforced amalgamation of police forces has produced many areas of local government for police purposes which are units for no other local government functions. And Scotland shows some variations even on the complexities of the system prevailing in England and Wales. The police service is unique too in having an officially established trade union, the Police Federation, created by statute, to which all the lower ranks automatically belong, which is the organ of representation, and which may not affiliate with other trade unions.

Mrs Hart threads her way skilfully through this involved pattern. Her book is admirably clear and concise; it gives a comprehensive account in a relatively short space of the development of the present structure of Britain's police system. The book is descriptive, but with as much history as is necessary to explain the actual and to reveal current problems. Mrs Hart accepts the system in its general contours as good though with some

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possibilities of minor improvement. She does not deal in the profundities of principle nor carry analysis much into the fields of constructive criticism although there is a thread of the latter running through her account. It is to be regretted that in her interpretation of her task she did not allow herself more latitude in this direction, for which her work shows her to be well equipped.

There are, however, many points of interest raised by this book. Should not the Home Office Inspectors inspect and report upon the Metropolitan Police as they do on the provincial forces? Mrs Hart suggests that the annual reports are inadequate; 'generally speaking the strong rather than the weak points of the service are emphasized . . . Incidentally it is not clear what the position would be if an Inspector wished to publish in his report something to which the Home Secretary took exception'. There is also the question of the extent of ministerial responsibility: 'Parliamentary control over the Home Secretary's administration of the provincial police has not kept pace with the growth in his powers and his use of them.' Some uncertainty appears still to exist as to the admissibility of Parliamentary Questions on matters where the Home Secretary can override local authorities. Mrs Hart is favourable to the amalgamations brought about as a result of the Police Act 1946, and would welcome a further reduction in the number of the very small forces. She is doubtful of the adequacy of the procedures for dealing with complaints against the police, and more especially against chief constables; but she is only able to mention, without dealing with, the Oaksey Committee's recommendations for improvement, as these came out after her book was written. Then there is the anomaly of the continued existence of the Standing Joint Committees for controlling the county police. Created as a temporary expedient in 1888 when there were doubts about the ability of the newly elected county council to shoulder this responsibility, intended for abolition by the Government in 1914, they nevertheless remain in operation.

Finally there are two subjects of which more discussion would have been welcome. First, there is the contrast between the Scottish and English practice 'in regard to the prosecution of offenders. In Scotland the police are investigators, but not, except to a limited extent, prosecutors'. The whole question of the relations between the police and the public as affected by the working of the so-called 'police courts', particularly in London, may perhaps be regarded as marginal to a study of this kind, but it is one which merits attention. Mrs Hart has safeguarded herself against the charge of omission: 'It is not proposed in this book, which is concerned mainly with the development and administration of the police, to discuss police powers and procedure, important though the subject is; but no account of the police in the nineteen-twenties would be complete without a brief mention of the fact that more accusations than usual were at this period made against the police, especially the Metropolitan Police.' It is a pity that she felt it sufficient to be quite so brief. For the accusations were not confined to the nineteen-twenties, and there are critics who believe that they point to fundamental defects in the Metropolitan Police system, in some degree connected with the operations of the police in courts.

Secondly, there is the question of recruitment to the higher offices in the police. No one can accept as satisfactory a position in which to such a considerable extent the police fail to produce from within their own ranks men suitable for promotion to the top. The Hendon Police College, though it could be criticized on some grounds, was a praiseworthy attempt to begin to provide a remedy for this failing. It could have been improved. Instead it has been abolished, and replaced by an institution which because it scarcely touches the officer until he reaches middle age, entirely fails to remedy the unattractiveness of the police service to the more intelligent and ambitious among potential young entrants.

Mrs Hart does in fact make this point, and it would be most unfair to her valuable contribution to general knowledge of the whole subject of police

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administration, and her worthy addition to the 'Town and County Hall Series', to complain that she did not make more of it. We should instead be grateful for the accurate and comprehensive way in which she has given us the basic facts.

H. R. G. GREAVES

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*The inclusion of any book in this list does not preclude its review in a later issue*

HERMAN AUSUBEL: *Historians and their Craft: A Study of the Presidential Addresses of the American Historical Association, 1884-1945*. *Columbia University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege)*, 31s. 6d. net.

F. BECK & W. GODIN: *Russian Purge and the Extraction of Confession*. *Hurst & Blackett*, 10s. 6d. net.

JOHN BERRYMAN: *Stephen Crane*. *Methuen*, 15s. net.

E. H. PHELPS BROWN: *A Course in Applied Economics*. *Pitman*, 25s. net.

MARGARET CLAPP (Ed.): *The Modern University*. *Cornell University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege)*, 20s. net.

SIR JAMES E. EDMONDS (Compiler): *A Short History of World War 1*. *Oxford University Press*, 30s. net.

E. E. EVANS-Pritchard: *Social Anthropology. The Broadcast Lectures*. *Cohen & West*, 8s. 6d. net.

C. R. FAY: *The Palace of Industry 1851*. *Cambridge University Press*, 18s. net.

DOUGLAS GRANT: *James Thomson: Poet of 'The Seasons'*. *Cresset Press*, 18s. net.

PHYLLIS HARTNOLL (Ed.): *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre*. *Oxford University Press*, 35s. net.

JACQUETTA HAWKES: *A Land*. *Cresset Press*, 21s. net.

ELIZABETH HILL: *Why Need we Study the Slavs. An inaugural Lecture*. *Cambridge University Press*, 2s. net.

SIR IVOR JENNINGS: *The Commonwealth of Asia*. *Oxford University Press*, 10s. 6d. net.

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